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Far from the Madding Crowd.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAIR: THE JOURNEY: THE FIRE.



TWO months passed away. We are brought on to a day in February, on which was held the yearly statute or hiring fair in the town of Casterbridge.

At one end of the street stood from two to three hundred blithe and hearty labourers waiting upon Chance—all men of the stamp to whom labour suggests nothing worse than a wrestle with gravitation, and pleasure nothing better than a renunciation of the same. Among these, carters and waggoners were distinguished by having a piece of whip-cord twisted

round their hats; thatchers wore a fragment of woven straw; shepherds held their sheep-crooks in their hands; and thus the situation required was known to the hirers at a glance.

In the crowd was an athletic young fellow of somewhat superior

appearance to the rest—in fact, his superiority was marked enough to lead several ruddy peasants standing by to speak to him inquiringly, as to a farmer, and to use “Sir” as a terminational word. His answer always was,—

“I am looking for a place myself—a bailiff’s. Do you know of anybody who wants one?”

Gabriel was paler now. His eyes were more meditative, and his expression was more sad. He had passed through an ordeal of wretchedness which had given him more than it had taken away. He had lost all he possessed of worldly property. He had sunk from his modest elevation down to a lower ditch than that whence he had started; but there was left to him a dignified calm he had never before known, and that indifference to fate which, though it often makes a villain of a man, is the basis of his sublimity when it does not. And thus the abasement had been exaltation, and the loss gain.

In the morning a regiment of cavalry had left the town, and a sergeant and his party had been beating up for recruits through the four streets. As the end of the day drew on, and he found himself not hired, Gabriel almost wished that he had joined them, and gone off to serve his country. Weary of standing in the market-place, and not much minding the kind of work he turned his hand to, he decided to offer himself in some other capacity than that of bailiff.

All the farmers seemed to be wanting shepherds. Sheep-tending was Gabriel’s speciality. Turning down an obscure street and entering an obscure lane, he went up to a smith’s shop.

“How long would it take you to make a shepherd’s crook?”

“Twenty minutes.”

“How much?”

“Two shillings.”

He sat on a bench and the crook was made, a stem being given him into the bargain.

He then went to a ready-made clothes’ shop, the owner of which had a large rural connection. As the crook had absorbed most of Gabriel’s money, he attempted, and carried out, an exchange of his overcoat for a shepherd’s regulation smock-frock.

This transaction having been completed, he again hurried off to the centre of the town, and stood on the kerb of the pavement, as a shepherd, crook in hand.

Now that Oak had turned himself into a shepherd, it seemed that bailiffs were most in demand. However, two or three farmers noticed him and drew near. Dialogues followed, more or less in the subjoined form:

“Where do you come from?”

“Norcombe.”

“That’s a long way.”

“Twenty miles.”

“Whose farm were you upon last?”

"My own."

This reply invariably operated like a rumour of cholera. The inquiring farmer would edge away and shake his head dubiously. Gabriel, like his dog, was too good to be trustworthy, and he never made any advance beyond this point.

It is better to accept any chance that offers itself; and then extemporise a procedure to fit it, than to get a good plan matured, and wait for a chance of using it. Gabriel wished he had not nailed up his colours as a shepherd, but had instead laid himself out for anything in the whole cycle of labour that was required in the fair. It grew dusk. Some merry men were whistling and singing by the corn-exchange. Gabriel's hand, which had lain for some time idle in his smock-frock pocket, touched his flute, which he carried there. Here was an opportunity for putting his dearly bought wisdom into practice.

He drew out his flute and began to play "Jockey to the Fair" in the style of a man who had never known a moment's sorrow. Oak could pipe with Arcadian sweetness, and the sound of the well-known notes cheered his own heart as well as those of the loungers. He played on with spirit, and in half an hour had earned in pence what was a small fortune to a destitute man.

By making inquiries he learnt that there was another fair at Shottsford the next day.

"Where is Shottsford?"

"Eight miles t'other side of Weatherbury."

Weatherbury! It was where Bathsheba had gone two months before. This information was like coming from night into noon.

"How far is it to Weatherbury?"

"Five or six miles."

Bathsheba had probably left Weatherbury long before this time, but the place had enough interest attaching to it to lead Oak to choose Shottsford fair as his next field of inquiry, because it lay in the Weatherbury quarter. Moreover the Weatherbury folk were by no means uninteresting intrinsically. If report spoke truly they were as hardy, merry, thriving, wicked a set as any in the whole county. Oak resolved to sleep at Weatherbury that night on his way to Shottsford, and struck out at once into a footpath which had been recommended as a short cut to the village in question.

The path wended through water-meadows traversed by little brooks, whose quivering surfaces were braided along their centres, and folded into creases at the sides, or, where the flow was more rapid, the stream was pied with spots of white froth, which rode on in undisturbed serenity. On the high-road the dead and dry carcases of leaves tapped the ground as they bowled along helter-skelter upon the shoulders of the wind, and little birds in the hedges were rustling their feathers and tucking themselves in comfortably for the night, retaining their places if Oak kept moving, but flying away if he stopped to look at them. He passed

through a wood where the game-birds were rising to their roosts, and heard the crack-voiced cock-pheasants' "cu-uck, cuck," and the wheezy whistle of the hens.

By the time he had walked three or four miles, every shape on the landscape had assumed a uniform hue of blackness. He ascended a hill and could just discern ahead of him a waggon, drawn up under a great overhanging tree on the roadside.

On coming close, he found there were no horses attached to it, the spot being apparently quite deserted. The waggon, from its position, seemed to have been left there for the night, for beyond about half a truss of hay which was heaped in the bottom, it was quite empty. Gabriel sat down on the shafts of the vehicle and considered his position. He calculated that he had walked a very fair proportion of the journey; and having been on foot since daybreak, he felt tempted to lie down upon the hay in the waggon instead of pushing on to the village of Weatherbury, and having to pay for a lodging.

Eating his last slices of bread and ham, and drinking from the bottle of cider he had taken the precaution to bring with him, he got into the lonely waggon. Here he spread half of the hay as a bed, and, as well as he could in the darkness, pulled the other half over him by way of bed-clothes, covering himself entirely, and feeling, physically, as comfortable as ever he had been in his life. Inward melancholy it was impossible for a man like Oak, introspective far beyond his neighbours, to banish quite, whilst conning the present untoward page of his history. So, thinking of his misfortunes, amorous and pastoral, he fell asleep, shepherds enjoying, in common with sailors, the privilege of being able to summon the god instead of having to wait for him.

On somewhat suddenly awaking, after a sleep of whose length he had no idea, Oak found that the waggon was in motion. He was being carried along the road at a rate rather considerable for a vehicle without springs, and under circumstances of physical uneasiness, his head being dandled up and down on the bed of the waggon like a kettledrum-stick. He then distinguished voices in conversation, coming from the forepart of the waggon. His concern at this dilemma (which would have been alarm, had he been a thriving man; but misfortune is a fine opiate to personal terror) led him to peer cautiously from the hay, and the first sight he beheld were the stars above him. Charles's Wain was getting towards a right angle with the Pole Star, and Gabriel concluded that it must be about nine o'clock—in other words, that he had slept two hours. This small astronomical calculation was made without any positive effort, and whilst he was stealthily turning to discover, if possible, into whose hands he had fallen.

Two figures were dimly visible in front, sitting with their legs outside the waggon, one of whom was driving. Gabriel soon found that this was the waggoner, and it appeared they had come from Casterbridge fair, like himself.

A conversation was in progress, which continued thus :—

"Be as 'twill, she's a fine handsome body as far's looks be concerned. But that's only the skin of the woman, and these dandy cattle be as proud as a lucifer in their insides."

"Ay—so 'a seem, Billy Smallbury—so 'a seem." This utterance was very shaky by nature, and more so by circumstance, the jolting of the waggon not being without its effect upon the speaker's larynx. It came from the man who held the reins.

"She's a very vain feymell—so 'tis said here and there."

"Ah, now. If so be 'tis like that, I can't look her in the face. Lord, no: not I—heh-heh-heh! Such a shy man as I be!"

"Yes—she's very vain. 'Tis said that every night at going to bed she looks in the glass to put on her nightcap properly."

"And not a married woman. Oh, the world!"

"And 'a can play the peanner, so 'tis said. Can play so clever that 'a can make a psalm tune sound as well as the merriest loose song a man can wish for."

"D'ye tell o't! A happy merey for us, and I feel quite unspeakable! And how do she pay?"

"That I don't know, Master Poorgrass."

On hearing these and other similar remarks, a wild thought flashed into Gabriel's mind that they might be speaking of Bathsheba. There were, however, no grounds for retaining such a supposition, for the waggon, though going in the direction of Weatherbury, might be going beyond it, and the woman alluded to seemed to be the mistress of some estate. They were now apparently close upon Weatherbury, and not to alarm the speakers unnecessarily, Gabriel slipped out of the waggon unseen.

He turned to an opening in the hedge, which he found to be a stile, and mounting thereon, he sat meditating whether to seek a cheap lodging in the village, or to ensure a cheaper one by lying under some hay or corn-stack. The crunching jangle of the waggon died upon his ear. He was about to walk on, when he noticed on his left hand an unusual light—appearing about half a mile distant. Oak watched it, and the glow increased. Something was on fire.

Gabriel again mounted the stile, and, leaping down on the other side upon what he found to be ploughed soil, made across the field in the exact direction of the fire. The blaze, enlarging in a double ratio by his approach and its own increase, showed him as he drew nearer the outlines of ricks beside it, lighted up to great distinctness. A rickyard was the source of the fire. His weary face now began to be painted over with a rich orange glow, and the whole front of his smock-frock and gaiters was covered with a dancing shadow-pattern of thorn-twigs—the light reaching him through a leafless intervening hedge—and the metallic curve of his sheep-crook shone silver-bright in the same abounding rays. He came up to the boundary fence, and stood to regain breath. It seemed as if the spot was unoccupied by a living soul.

The fire was issuing from a long straw-stack, which was so far gone as to preclude a possibility of saving it. A rick burns differently from a house. As the wind blows the fire inwards, the portion in flames completely disappears like melting sugar, and the outline is lost to the eye. However, a hay or a wheat-rick, well put together, will resist combustion for a length of time, if it begins on the outside.

This before Gabriel's eyes was a rick of straw, loosely put together, and the flames darted into it with lightning swiftness. It glowed on the windward side, rising and falling in intensity, like the coal of a cigar. Then a superincumbent bundle rolled down, with a whisking noise, flames elongated, and bent themselves about, with a quiet roar, but no crackle. Banks of smoke went off horizontally at the back like passing clouds, and behind these burned hidden pyres, illuminating the semi-transparent sheet of smoke to a lustrous yellow uniformity. Individual straws in the foreground were consumed in a creeping movement of ruddy heat, as if they were knots of red worms, and above shone imaginary fiery faces, tongues hanging from lips, glaring eyes, and other impish forms, from which at intervals sparks flew in clusters like birds from a nest.

Oak suddenly ceased from being a mere spectator by discovering the case to be more serious than he had at first imagined. A scroll of smoke blew aside and revealed to him a wheat-rick in startling juxtaposition with the decaying one, and behind this a series of others, composing the main corn produce of the farm; so that instead of the straw-stack standing, as he had imagined, comparatively isolated, there was a regular connection between it and the remaining stacks of the group.

Gabriel leapt over the hedge, and saw that he was not alone. The first man he came to was running about in a great hurry, as if his thoughts were several yards in advance of his body, which they could never drag on fast enough.

"Oh, man—fire, fire! A good master and a bad servant is fire, fire!—I mane a bad servant and a good master. Oh, Mark Clark—come! And you, Billy Smallbury—and you, Maryann Money—and you, Joseph Poorgrass, and Matthew there, for his mercy endureth for ever!" Other figures now appeared behind this shouting man and among the smoke, and Gabriel found that, far from being alone, he was in a great company—whose shadows danced merrily up and down, timed by the jiggling of the flames, and not at all by their owners' movements. The assemblage—belonging to that class of society which casts its thoughts into the form of feeling, and its feelings into the form of commotion—set to work with a remarkable confusion of purpose.

"Stop the draught under the wheat-rick!" cried Gabriel to those nearest to him. The corn stood on stone saddles, and between these, tongues of yellow hues from the burning straw licked and darted playfully. If the fire once got *under* this stack, all would be lost.

"Get a tarpaulin—quick!" said Gabriel.

A rick-cloth was brought, and they hung it like a curtain across the

channel. The flames immediately ceased to go under the bottom of the corn-stack, and stood up vertical.

"Stand here with a bucket of water and keep the cloth wet," said Gabriel again.

The flames, now driven upwards, began to attack the angles of the huge roof covering the wheat-stack.

"A ladder," cried Gabriel.

"The ladder was against the straw-rick and is burnt to a cinder," said a spectre-like form in the smoke.

Oak seized the cut ends of the sheaves, as if he were going to engage in the operation of "reed-drawing," and digging in his feet, and occasionally sticking in the stem of his sheep-crook, he clambered up the beetling face. He at once sat astride the very apex, and began with his crook to beat off the fiery fragments which had lodged thereon, shouting to the others to get him a bough and a ladder, and some water.

Billy Smallbury—one of the men who had been on the waggon—by this time had found a ladder, which Mark Clark ascended, holding on beside Oak upon the thatch. The smoke at this corner was stifling, and Clark, a nimble fellow, having been handed a bucket of water, bathed Oak's face and sprinkled him generally, whilst Gabriel, now with a long beech-bough in one hand, in addition to his crook in the other, kept sweeping the stack and dislodging all fiery particles.

On the ground the groups of villagers were still occupied in doing all they could to keep down the conflagration, which was not much. They were all tinged orange, and backed up by shadows as tall as fir-trees. Round the corner of the largest stack, out of the direct rays of the fire, stood a pony, bearing a young woman on its back. By her side was another female, on foot. These two seemed to keep at a distance from the fire, that the horse might not become restive.

"He's a shepherd," said the woman on foot. "Yes—he is. See how his crook shines as he beats the rick with it. And his smock-frock is burnt in two holes, I declare! A fine young shepherd he is too, ma'am."

"Whose shepherd is he?" said the equestrian in a clear voice.

"Don't know, ma'am."

"Don't any of the others know?"

"Nobody at all—I've asked 'em. Quite a stranger, they say."

The young woman on the pony rode out from the shade and looked anxiously around.

"Do you think the barn is safe?" she said.

"D'ye think the barn is safe, Jan Coggan?" said the second woman, passing on the question to the nearest man in that direction.

"Safe now—leastwise I think so. If this rick had gone the barn would have followed. 'Tis that bold shepherd up there that have done the most good—he sitting on the top o' rick, whizzing his great long arms about like a windmill."

"He does work hard," said the young woman on horseback, looking

up at Gabriel through her thick woollen veil. "I wish he was shepherd here. Don't any of you know his name?"

"Never heard the man's name in my life, or seed his form afore."

The fire began to get worsted, and Gabriel's elevated position being no longer required of him, he made as if to descend.

"Maryann," said the girl on horseback, "go to him as he comes down, and say that the farmer wishes to thank him for the great service he has done."

Maryann stalked off towards the rick and met Oak at the foot of the ladder. She delivered her message.

"Where is your master the farmer?" asked Gabriel, kindling with the idea of getting employment that seemed to strike him now.

"Tisn't a master; 'tis a mistress, shepherd."

"A woman farmer?"

"Ay, 'a b'lieve, and a rich one too!" said a bystander. "Lately 'a come here from a distance. Took on her uncle's farm, who died suddenly. Used to measure his money in half-pint cups. They say now that she've business in every bank in Casterbridge, and thinks no more of playing pitch-and-toss-sovereign than you and I do pitch-halfpenny—not a bit in the world, shepherd."

"That's she back there upon the pony," said Maryann; "wi' her face a covered up in a cloth with holes in it."

Oak, his features black, grimy, and undiscoverable from the smoke and heat, his smock-frock burnt into holes, dripping with water, the ash-stem of his sheep-crook charred six inches shorter than it had been, advanced with the humility stern adversity had thrust upon him up to the slight female form in the saddle. He lifted his hat with respect, and not without gallantry: stepping close to her hanging feet, he said in a hesitating voice—

"Do you happen to want a shepherd, ma'am?"

She lifted the Shetland veil tied round her face, and looked all astonishment. Gabriel and his cold-hearted darling, Bathsheba Everdene, were face to face.

Bathsheba did not speak, and he mechanically repeated in an abashed and sad voice,

"Do you want a shepherd, ma'am?"

CHAPTER VII.

RECOGNITION: A TIMID GIRL.

BATHSHEBA withdrew into the shade. She scarcely knew whether most to be amused at the singularity of the meeting, or to be concerned at its awkwardness. There was room for a little pity, also for a very little exultation; the former at his position, the latter at her own. Embarrassed

she was not, and she remembered Gabriel's declaration of love to her at Norcombe only to think she had nearly forgotten it.

"Yes," she murmured, putting on an air of dignity, and turning again to him with a little warmth of cheek, "I do want a shepherd. But——"

"He's the very man, ma'am," said one of the villagers, quietly.

Conviction breeds conviction. "Ay, that 'a is," said a second, decisively.

"The man, truly!" said a third, with heartiness.

"He's all there!" said number four, fervidly.

"Then will you tell him to speak to the bailiff," said Bathsheba.

All was practical again now. A summer eve and loneliness would have been necessary to give the meeting its proper fulness of romance.

The bailiff was pointed out to Gabriel, who, checking the palpitation within his breast at discovering that this Ashtereith of strange report was only a modification of Venus the well-known and admired, retired with him to talk over the necessary preliminaries of hiring.

The fire before them wasted away. "Men," said Bathsheba, "you shall take a little refreshment after this extra work. Will you come to the house?"

"We could knock in a bit and a drop a good deal freer, Miss, if so be ye'd send it to Warren's Malthouse," replied the spokesman.

Bathsheba then rode off into the darkness, and the men straggled on to the village in twos and threes—Oak and the bailiff being left by the rick alone.

"And now," said the bailiff, finally, "all is settled, I think, about yer coming, and I am going home-along. Good-night to ye, shepherd."

"Can you get me a lodging?" inquired Gabriel.

"That I can't, indeed," he said, moving past Oak as a Christian edges past an offertory-plate when he does not mean to contribute. "If you follow on the road till you come to Warren's Malthouse, where they are all gone to have their snap of victuals, I dare say some of 'em will tell you of a place. Good-night to ye, shepherd."

The bailiff, who showed this nervous dread of loving his neighbours as himself, went up the hill, and Oak walked on to the village, still astonished at the rencontre with Bathsheba, glad of his nearness to her, and perplexed at the rapidity with which the unpractised girl of Norcombe had developed into the supervising and cool woman here. But some women only require an emergency to make them fit for one.

Obliged, to some extent, to forego dreaming in order to find the way, he reached the churchyard, and passed round it under the wall where several old chestnuts grew. There was a wide margin of grass along here, and Gabriel's footsteps were deadened by its softness, even at this indurating period of the year. When abreast of a trunk which appeared to be the oldest of the old, he became aware that a figure was standing behind it on the other side. Gabriel did not pause in his walk, and in

another moment he accidentally kicked a loose stone. The noise was enough to disturb the motionless stranger, who started and assumed a careless position.

It was a slim girl, rather thinly clad.

"Good-night to you," said Gabriel, heartily.

"Good-night," said the girl to Gabriel.

The voice was unexpectedly attractive; it was the low and dulcet note suggestive of romance; common in descriptions, rare in experience.

"I'll thank you to tell me if I'm in the way for Warren's Malthouse?" Gabriel resumed, primarily to gain the information, indirectly to get more of the music.

"Quite right. It's at the bottom of the hill. And do you know——" The girl hesitated, and then went on again. "Do you know how late they keep open the 'Buck's Head Inn?'" She seemed to be won by Gabriel's heartiness, as Gabriel had been won by her modulations.

"I don't know where the 'Buck's Head' is, or anything about it. Do you think of going there to-night?"

"Yes——." The female again paused. There was no necessity for any continuance of speech, and the fact that she did add more seemed to proceed from an unconscious desire to show unconcern by making a remark, which is noticeable in the ingenuous when they are acting by stealth. "You are not a Weatherbury man?" she said, timorously.

"I am not. I am the new shepherd—just arrived."

"Only a shepherd—and you seem almost a farmer by your ways."

"Only a shepherd," Gabriel repeated, in a dull cadence of finality. His thoughts were directed to the past, his eyes to the feet of the girl, and for the first time he saw lying there a bundle of some sort. She may have perceived the direction of his face, for she said coaxingly:

"You won't say anything in the parish about having seen me here, will you—at least, not for a day or two?"

"I won't if you wish me not to," said Oak.

"Thank you, indeed," the other replied. "I am rather poor, and I don't want people to know anything about me." Then she was silent, and shivered.

"You ought to have a cloak on such a cold night," Gabriel observed. "I would advise you to get indoors."

"Oh, no! Would you mind going on and leaving me? I thank you much for what you have told me."

"I will go on," he said; adding hesitatingly—"Since you are not very well off, perhaps you would accept this trifle from me. It is only a shilling, but it is all I have to spare."

"Yes, I will take it," said the stranger, gratefully.

She extended her hand; Gabriel his. In feeling for each other's palms in the gloom before the money could be passed, a minute incident occurred which told much. Gabriel's fingers alighted on the young woman's wrist. It was beating with a throb of tragic intensity. He had

frequently felt the same quick, hard beat in the femoral artery of his lambs when overdriven. It suggested a consumption too great of a vitality which, to judge from her figure and stature, was already too little.

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing."

"But there is?"

"No, no, no! Let your having seen me be a secret!"

"Very well; I will. Good-night, again."

"Good-night."

The young girl remained motionless by the tree and Gabriel descended into the village. He fancied that he had felt himself in the penumbra of a very deep sadness when touching that slight and fragile creature. But wisdom lies in moderating mere impressions, and Gabriel endeavoured to think little of this.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MALTHOUSE: THE CHAT: NEWS.

WARREN'S Malthouse was enclosed by an old wall inwrapped with ivy, and though not much of the exterior was visible at this hour, the character and purposes of the building were clearly enough shown by its outline upon the sky. From the walls an overhanging thatched roof sloped up to a point in the centre, upon which rose a small wooden lantern, fitted with louver-boards on all the four sides, and from these openings a mist was dimly perceived to be escaping into the night air. There was no window in front; but a square hole in the door was glazed with a single pane, through which red comfortable rays now stretched out upon the ivied wall in front. Voices were to be heard inside.

Oak's hand skimmed the surface of the door with fingers extended to an Elymas-the-Sorcerer pattern, till he found a leathern strap, which he pulled. This lifted a wooden latch, and the door swung open.

The room inside was lighted only by the ruddy glow from the kiln mouth, which shone over the floor with the streaming horizontality of the setting sun, and threw upwards the shadows of all facial irregularities in those assembled around, with the effect of the footlights upon the features of her Majesty's servants when they approach too near the front. The stone-flag floor was worn into a path from the doorway to the kiln, and into undulations everywhere. A curved settle of unplanned oak stretched along one side, and in a remote corner was a small bed and bedstead, the owner and frequent occupier of which was the maltster.

This aged man was now sitting opposite the fire, his frosty white hair and beard overgrowing his gnarled figure like the grey moss and lichen upon a leafless apple-tree. He wore breeches and the laced-up shoes called ankle-jacks; he kept his eyes fixed upon the fire.

Gabriel's nose was greeted by an atmosphere laden with the sweet smell of new malt. The conversation (which seemed to have been concerning the origin of the fire) immediately ceased, and every one ocularly criticised him to the degree expressed by contracting the flesh of their foreheads and looking at him with narrowed eyelids, as if he had been a light too strong for their sight. Several exclaimed meditatively, after this operation had been completed:

"Oh, 'tis the new shepherd, a' b'lieve."

"We thought we heard a hand pawing about the door for the bobbin, but weren't sure 'twere not a dead leaf blowed across," said another. "Come in, shepherd; sure ye be welcome, though we don't know yer name."

"Gabriel Oak, that's my name neighbours."

The ancient maltster sitting in the midst turned at this—his turning being as the turning of a rusty crane.

"That's never Gable Oak's grandson over at Norcombe—never!" he said, as a formula expressive of surprise, which nobody was supposed for a moment to take literally.

"My father and my grandfather were old men of the name of Gabriel," said the shepherd, placidly.

"Thought I knowed the man's face as I seed him on the rick!—thought I did! And where be ye trading o't to now, shepherd?"

"I'm thinking of biding here," said Mr. Oak.

"Knowed yer grandfather for years and years!" continued the maltster, the words coming forth of their own accord as if the momentum previously imparted had been sufficient.

"Ah—and did you!"

"Knowed yer grandmother."

"And her too!"

"Likewise knowed yer father when he was a child. Why, my boy Jacob there and your father were sworn brothers—that they were sure—weren't ye, Jacob?"

"Ay, sure," said his son, a young man about sixty-five, with a semi-bald head and one tooth in the left centre of his upper jaw, which made much of itself by standing prominent, like a milestone in a bank. "But 'twas Joe had most to do with him. However, my son William must have knowed the very man afore us—didn't ye, Billy, afore ye left Norcombe?"

"No, 'twas Andrew," said Jacob's son Billy, a child of forty, or thereabouts, who manifested the peculiarity of possessing a cheerful soul in a gloomy body, and whose whiskers were assuming a chinchilla shade here and there.

"I remember Andrew," said Oak, "as being a man in the place when I was quite a child."

"Ay—the other day I and my youngest daughter Liddy were over at my grandson's christening," continued Billy. "We were talking about

this very family, and 'twas only last Purification Day in this very world, when the use-money is gied away to the second-best poor folk, you know, shepherd, and I can mind the day because they all had to traypse up to the Vestry—yes, this very man's family."

"Come, shepherd, and drink. 'Tis gape and swaller with us—a drap of sommit, but not of much account," said the maltster, removing from the fire his eyes, which were vermilion-red and bleared by gazing into it for so many years. "Take up the God-forgive-me, Jacob. See if 'tis warm, Jacob."

Jacob stooped to the God-forgive-me, which was a two-handled tall mug standing in the ashes, cracked and charred with heat, rather furred with extraneous matter about the outside, especially in the crevices of the handles, the innermost curves of which may not have seen daylight for several years by reason of this encrustation thereon—formed of ashes accidentally wetted with cider and baked hard; but to the mind of any sensible drinker the cup was no worse for that, being incontestably clean on the inside and about the rim. It may be observed that such a class of mug is called a God-forgive-me in Weatherbury and its vicinity for uncertain reasons; probably because its size makes any given toper feel ashamed of himself when he sees its bottom in drinking it empty: this idea is, however, a mere guess.

Jacob, on receiving the order to see if the liquor was warm enough, placidly dipped his forefinger into it by way of thermometer, and having pronounced it nearly of the proper degree, raised the cup and very civilly attempted to dust some of the ashes from the bottom with the skirt of his smock-frock, because Shepherd Oak was a stranger.

"A clane cup for the shepherd," said the maltster commandingly.

"No—not at all," said Gabriel, in a reproving tone of considerateness. "I never fuss about dirt in its natural state, and when I know what sort it is." Taking the mug he drank an inch or more from the depth of its contents, and duly passed it to the next man. "I wouldn't think of giving such trouble to neighbours in washing up when there's so much work to be done in the world already," continued Oak, in a moister tone, after recovering from the stoppage of breath ever occasioned by proper pulls at large mugs.

"A right sensible man," said Jacob.

"True, true, as the old woman said," observed a brisk young man—Mark Clark by name, a genial and pleasant gentleman, whom to meet anywhere in your travels was to know, to know was to drink with, and to drink with was, unfortunately, to pay for.

"And here's a mouthful of bread and bacon that mis'ess have sent, shepherd. The cider will go down better with a bit of victuals. Don't ye chaw quite close, shepherd, for I let the bacon fall in the road outside as I was bringing it along, and may be 'tis rather gritty. There, 'tis clane dirt; and we all know what that is, as you say, and you bain't a particular man we see, shepherd."

"True, true—not at all," said the friendly Oak.

"Don't let yer teeth quite meet, and you won't feel the sandiness at all. Ah! 'tis wonderful what can be done by contrivance!"

"My own mind exactly, neighbour."

"Ah, he's his grandfer's own grandson!—his grandfer were just such a nice unparticular man!" said the maltster.

"Drink, Henry Fray—drink," magnanimously said Jan Coggan, a person who held Saint-Simonian notions of share and share alike where liquor was concerned, as the vessel showed signs of approaching him in its gradual revolution among them.

Having at this moment reached the end of a wistful gaze into mid-air, Henry did not refuse. He was a man of more than middle age, with eye-brows high up in his forehead, who laid it down that the law of the world was bad, with a long-suffering look through his listeners at the world alluded to, as it presented itself to his imagination. He always signed his name "Henery"—strenuously insisting upon that spelling, and if any passing schoolmaster ventured to remark that the second "e" was superfluous and old-fashioned, he received the reply that "H-e-n-e-r-y" was the name he was christened and the name he would stick to—in the tone of one to whom orthographical differences were matters which had a great deal to do with personal character.

Mr. Jan Coggan, who had passed the cup to Henery, was a crimson man with a spacious countenance, and private glimmer in his eye, whose name had appeared on the marriage register of Weatherbury and neighbouring parishes as best man and chief witness in countless unions of the previous twenty years; he also very frequently filled the post of head god-father in baptisms of the subtly-jovial kind.

"Come, Mark Clark—come. Ther's plenty more in the barrel," said Jan.

"Ay—that I will, as the doctor said," replied Mr. Clark, who, twenty years younger than Jan Coggan, revolved in the same orbit. He secreted mirth on all occasions for special discharge at popular parties—his productions of this class being more noticeably advanced than Coggan's, inflicting a faint sense of reduplication and similitude upon the elder members of such companies.

"Why, Joseph Poorgrass, ye ha'n't had a drop!" said Mr. Coggan to a very shrinking man in the background, thrusting the cup towards him.

"Such a shy man as he is!" said Jacob Smallbury. "Why, ye've hardly had strength of eye enough to look in our young mis'ess's face, so I hear, Joseph?"

All looked at Joseph Poorgrass with pitying reproach.

"No—I've hardly looked at her at all," faltered Joseph, reducing his body smaller whilst talking, apparently from a meek sense of undue prominence. "And when I seed her, 'twas nothing but blushes with me!"

"Poor feller," said Mr. Clark.

"'Tis a curious nature for a man," said Jan Coggan.

"Yes," continued Joseph Poorgrass—his shyness, which was so painful as a defect, just beginning to fill him with a little complacency now that it was regarded in the light of an interesting study. "'Twere blush, blush, blush with me every minute of the time, when she was speaking to me."

"I believe ye, Joseph Poorgrass, for we all know ye to be a very bashful man."

"'Tis terrible bad for a man, poor soul," said the maltster. "And how long have ye suffered from it, Joseph?"

"Oh, ever since I was a boy. Yes—mother was concerned to her heart about it—yes. But 'twas all nought."

"Did ye ever take anything to try and stop it, Joseph Poorgrass?"

"Oh ay, tried all sorts. They took me to Greenhill Fair, and into a grate large jerry-go-nimble show, where there were women-folk riding round—standing upon horses, with hardly anything on but their smocks, but it didn't cure me a morsel—no, not a morsel. And then I was put errand-man at the Woman's Skittle Alley at the back of the 'Tailor's Arms' in Casterbridge. 'Twas a horrible gross situation, and altogether a very curious place for a good man. I had to stand and look wicked people in the face from morning till night; but 'twas no use—I was just as bad as ever after all. Blushes hev been in the family for generations. There, 'tis a happy providence that I be no worse, so to speak it—yes, a happy thing, and I feel my few poor gratitudes."

"True," said Jacob Smallbury, deepening his thoughts to a profounder view of the subject. "'Tis a thought to look at, that ye might have been worse, but even as you be, 'tis a very bad affliction for ye, Joseph. For ye see, shepherd, though 'tis very well for a woman, dang it all, 'tis awkward for a man like him, poor feller." He appealed to the shepherd by a heart-feeling glance.

"'Tis—'tis," said Gabriel, recovering from a meditation as to whether the saving to a man's soul in the run of a twelvemonth by saying "dang" instead of what it stood for, made it worth while to use the word. "Yes, very awkward for the man."

"Ay, and he's very timid, too," observed Jan Coggan. "Once he had been working late at Windleton, and had had a drap of drink, and lost his way as he was coming home-along through Yalbury Wood, didn't ye, Master Poorgrass?"

"No, no, no; not that story!" expostulated the modest man, forcing a laugh to bury his concern, and forcing out too much for the purpose—laughing over the greater part of his skin, round to his ears, and up among his hair, insomuch that Shepherd Oak, who was rather sensitive himself, was surfeited, and felt he would never adopt that plan for hiding trepidation any more.

"—And so 'a lost himself quite," continued Mr. Coggan, with an impassive face, implying that a true narrative, like time and tide, must run

its course and would wait for no man. "And as he was coming along in the middle of the night, much afeard, and not able to find his way out of the trees, nohow, 'a cried out, 'Man-a-lost! man-a-lost!' A owl in a tree happened to be crying 'Whoo-whoo-whoo!' as owls do you know, shepherd" (Gabriel nodded), "and Joseph, all in a tremble, said 'Joseph Poorgrass, of Weatherbury, sir!'"

"No, no, now—that's too much!" said the timid man, becoming a man of brazen courage all of a sudden. "I didn't say *sir*. I'll take my oath I didn't say 'Joseph Poorgrass o' Weatherbury, *sir*.' No, no; what's right is right, and I never said *sir* to the bird, knowing very well that no person of a gentleman's rank would be hollering there at that time o' night. 'Joseph Poorgrass of Weatherbury,'—that's every word I said, and I shouldn't ha' said that if 't hadn't been for Keeper Day's metheglin. . . . There, 'twas a merciful thing it ended where it did, as I may say," continued Joseph, swallowing his breath in content.

The question of which was right being tacitly waived by the company, Jan went on meditatively:

"And he's the fearfulest man, bain't ye, Joseph? Ay, another time 'ye were lost by Lambing-Down Gate, weren't ye, Joseph?"

"I was," replied Poorgrass, as if there were some matters too serious even for modesty to remember itself under, and this was one.

"Yes; that were the middle of the night, too. The gate would not open, try how he would, and knowing there was the Devil's hand in it, he kneeled down."

"Ay," said Joseph, acquiring confidence from the warmth of the fire, the cider, and a growing perception of the narrative capabilities of the experience alluded to. "My heart died within me, that time; but I kneeled down and said the Lord's Prayer, and then the Belief right through, and then the Ten Commandments, in earnest prayer. But no, the gate wouldn't open; and then I went on with Dearly Beloved Brethren, and, thinks I, this makes four, and 'tis all I know out of book, and if this don't do it nothing will, and I'm a lost man. Well, when I got to Saying After Me, I rose from my knees and found the gate would open—yes, neighbours, the gate opened the same as ever."

A meditation on the obvious inference was indulged in by all, and during its continuance each directed his vision into the ashpit, which glowed like a desert in the tropics under a vertical sun, shaping their eyes long and liny, partly because of the light, partly from the depth of the subject discussed—each man severally drawing upon the tablet of his imagination a clear and correct picture of Joseph Poorgrass under the remarkable conditions he had related, and surveying the position in all its bearings with critical exactness.

Gabriel broke the silence. "What sort of a place is this to live at, and what sort of a mis'ess is she to work under?" Gabriel's bosom thrilled gently as he thus slipped under the notice of the assembly the innermost subject of his heart.

"We d' know little of her—nothing. She only showed herself a few days ago. Her uncle was took bad, and the doctor was called with his world-wide skill; but he couldn't save the man. As I take it, she's going to keep on the farm."

"That's about the shape o't, 'a b'lieve," said Jan Coggan. "Ay, 'tis a very good family. I'd as soon be under 'em as under one here and there. Her uncle was a very fair sort of man. Did ye know en, shepherd—a bachelor-man?"

"Not at all."

The inquirer paused a moment, and then continued his relation, which, as did every remark he made, instead of being casual, seemed the result of a slow convergence of forces that had commenced their operation in times far remote.

"I used to go to his house a-courting my first wife, Charlotte, who was his dairymaid. Well, a very good-hearted man were Farmer Everdene, and I being a respectable young fellow was allowed to call and see her and drink as much ale as I liked, but not to carry away any—outside my skin I mane, of course."

"Ay, ay, Jan Coggan; we know yer maning."

"And so you see 'twas beautiful ale, and I wished to value his kindness as much as I could, and not to be so ill-mannered as to drink only a thimbleful, which would have been insulting the man's generosity——"

"True, Master Coggan, 'twould so," corroborated Mark Clark.

"——And so I used to eat a lot of salt afore going, and then by the time I got there I were as dry as a lime-basket—so thorough dry that that ale would slip down—ah, 'twould slip down sweet! Happy times! heavenly times! Ay, 'twere like drinking blessedness itself. Pints and pints! Such lovely drunks as I used to have at that house. You can mind, Jacob? You used to go wi' me sometimes."

"I can—I can," said Jacob. "That one, too, that we had at 'Buck's Head' on a White Monday was a pretty tippie—a very pretty tippie, indeed."

"'Twas. But for a drunk of really a noble class and on the highest principles, that brought you no nearer to the dark man than you were afore you begun, there was none like those in Farmer Everdene's kitchen. Not a single damn allowed; no, not a bare poor one, even at the most cheerful moment when all were blindest, though the good old word of sin thrown in here and there would have been a great relief to a merry soul."

"True," said the maltster. "Nature requires her swearing at the regular times, or she's not herself; and unholy exclamations is a necessity of life."

"But Charlotte," continued Coggan—"not a word of the sort would Charlotte allow, nor the smallest item of taking in vain. . . . Ay, poor Charlotte, I wonder if she had the good fortune to get into Heaven when

'a died! But 'a was never much in luck's way, and perhaps 'a went downwards after all, poor soul."

"And did any of you know Miss Everdene's father and mother?" inquired the shepherd, who found some difficulty in keeping the conversation in the desired channel.

"I knew them a little," said Jacob Smallbury; "but they were town-folk, and didn't live here. They've been dead for years. Father, what sort of people were mis'ess' father and mother?"

"Well," said the maltster, "he wasn't much to look at; but she was a lovely woman. He was fond enough of her as his sweetheart."

"Used to kiss her in scores and long-hundreds, so 'twas said here and there," observed Coggan.

"He was very proud of her, too, when they were married, as I've been told," said the maltster.

"Ay," said Coggan. "He admired his wife so much, that he used to light the candle three times every night to look at her."

"Boundless love; I shouldn't have supposed it in the world's universe!" murmured Joseph Poorgrass, who habitually spoke on a large scale in his moral reflections.

"Well, to be sure," said Gabriel.

"Oh, 'tis true enough. I knowed the man and woman both well. Levi Everdene—that was the man's name, sure enough. 'Man,' saith I in my hurry, but he were of a higher circle of life than that—'a was a gentleman-tailor really, worth scores of pounds. And he became a very celebrated bankrupt two or three times."

"Oh, I thought he was quite a common man!" said Joseph.

"Oh no, no! That man failed for heaps of money; hundreds in gold and silver."

The maltster being rather short of breath, Mr. Coggan, after absently scrutinising a coal which had fallen among the ashes, took up the narrative, with a private twirl of his eye:

"Well, now, you'd hardly believe it, but that man—our Miss Everdene's father—was one of the ficklest husbands alive, after a while. Understand, 'a didn't want to be fickle, but he couldn't help it. The pore feller were faithful and true enough to her in his wish, but his heart would rove, do what he would. Ay, 'a spoke to me in real tribulation about it once. 'Coggan,' he said, 'I could never wish for a handsomer woman than I've got, but feeling she's ticketed as my lawful wife, I can't help my wicked heart wandering, do what I will.' But at last I believe he cured it by making her take off her wedding-ring and calling her by her maiden name as they sat together after the shop was shut, and so 'a would get to fancy she was only his sweetheart, and not married to him at all. And so as soon as he could thoroughly fancy he was doing wrong and committing the seventh, 'a got to like her as well as ever, and they lived on a perfect example of mutel love."

"Well, 'twas a most ungodly remedy," murmured Joseph Poorgrass,

"but we ought to feel deep cheerfulness, as I may say, that a happy providence kept it from being any worse. You see, he might have gone the bad road and given his eyes to unlawfulness entirely—yes, gross unlawfulness, so to say it."

"You see," said Billy Smallbury, with testimonial emphasis, "the man's will was to do right, sure enough, but his heart didn't chime in."

"He got so much better, that he was quite religious in his later years, wasn't he, Jan?" said Joseph Poorgrass. "He got himself confirmed over again in a more serious way, and took to saying 'Amen' almost as loud as a clerk, and he liked to copy comforting verses from the tombstones. He used, too, to hold the holy money-plate at Let Your Light so Shine, and stand godfather to poor little come-by-chance children that had no father at all in the eye of matrimony, and he kept a missionary-box upon his table to nab folks unawares when they called; yes, and he would box the charity-boys' ears, if they laughed in church, till they could hardly stand upright, and do other deeds of piety common to the saintly inclined."

"Ay, at that time he thought of nothing but righteousness," added Billy Smallbury. "One day Parson Thirdly met him and said, 'Good-morning, Mister Everdene; 'tis a fine day!' 'Amen,' said Everdene, quite absent-like, thinking only of religion when he seed a parson. Yes, he was a very Christian man."

"His second-cousin, John, was the most religious of the family, however," said the old maltster. "None of the others were so pious as he, for they never went past us church people in their Christianity, but John's feelings grewed as strong as a Chapel member's. 'A was a watch and clock maker by trade and thought of nothing but godliness, poor man. 'I judge every clock according to his works,' he used to say when he were in his holy frame of mind. Ay, he likewise was a very Christian man."

"Their daughter was not at all a pretty chiel at that time," said Henery Fray. "Never should have thought she'd have growed up such a handsome body as she is."

"'Tis to be hoped her temper is as good as her face."

"Well, yes; but the baily will have most to do with the business and ourselves. Ah!" Henery shook his head, gazed into the ashpit, and smiled volumes of ironical knowledge.

"A queer Christian, as the D—— said of the owl," volunteered Mark Clark.

"He is," said Henery, with a manner implying that irony must necessarily cease at a certain point. "Between we two, man and man, I believe that man would as soon tell a lie Sundays as working-days, that I do so."

"Good faith, you do talk," said Gabriel, with apprehension.

"True enough," said the man of bitter moods, looking round upon the company, with the antithetic laughter that comes from a keener

appreciation of the untold miseries of life than ordinary men are capable of. "Ah, there's people of one sort, and people of another, but that man—bless your souls!"

The company suspended consideration of whether they wanted their souls blessed that moment, as the shortest way to the end of the story.

"I believe that if so be that Baily Pennyways' heart were put inside a nutshell, he'd rattle," continued Henery. "He'll strain for money as a salmon will strain for the river's head. 'Tis a thief and a robber, that's what 'tis."

Gabriel thought fit to change the subject. "You must be a very aged man, maltster, to have sons growed up so old and ancient," he remarked.

"Father's so old that 'a can't mind his age, can ye, father?" interposed Jacob. "And he's growed terrible crooked, too, lately," Jacob continued, surveying his father's figure, which was rather more bowed than his own. "Really, one may say that father there is three-double."

"Crooked folk will last a long while," said the maltster, grimly, and not in the best humour.

"Shepherd would like to hear the pedigree of yer life, father—wouldn't ye, shepherd?"

"Ay, that I should," said Gabriel, with the heartiness of a man who had longed to hear it for several months. "What may your age be, maltster?"

The maltster cleared his throat in an exaggerated form for emphasis, and elongating his gaze to the remotest point of the ashpit, said, in the slow speech justifiable when the importance of a subject is so generally felt that any mannerism must be tolerated in getting at it, "Well, I don't mind the year I were born in, but perhaps I can reckon up the places I've lived at, and so get it that way. I bode at Juddle Farm across there" (nodding to the north) "till I were eleven. I bode seven at Lower Twifford" (nodding to the east), "where I took to malting. I went therefrom to Norcombe, and malted there two-and-twenty years, and two-and-twenty years I was there turnip-hoeing and harvesting. Ah, I knowed that old place Norcombe years afore you were thought of, Master Oak" (Oak smiled a corroboration of the fact). "Then I malted at Snoodly-under-Drool four year, and four year turnip-hoeing; and I was fourteen times eleven months at Moreford St. Jude's" (nodding north-west-by-north). "Old Twills wouldn't hire me for more than eleven months at a time, to keep me from being chargeable to the parish if so be I was disabled. Then I was three year at Mellstock, and I've been here one-and-thirty year come Candlemas. How much is that?"

"Hundred and seventeen," chuckled another old gentleman, given to mental arithmetic and little conversation, who had hitherto sat unobserved in a corner.

"Well, then, that's my age," said the maltster, emphatically.

"Oh, no, father!" Jacob remonstrated. "Your turnip-hoeing were in

the summer and your malting in the winter of the same years, and ye don't ought to count both halves, father."

"Chok' it all! I lived through the summers, didn't I? That's my question. I suppose ye'll say next I be no age at all to speak of?"

"Sure we shan't," said Gabriel, soothingly.

"Ye be a very old aged person, maltster," attested Jan Coggan, also soothingly. "We all know that, and ye must have a wonderful talented constitution to be able to live so long, mustn't he, neighbours?"

"True, true; ye must, maltster, a wonderful talented constitution," said the meeting, unanimously.

The maltster, being now pacified, was even generous enough to voluntarily disparage in a slight degree the virtue of having lived a great many years, by mentioning that the cup they were drinking out of was three years older than he.

While the cup was being examined, the end of Gabriel Oak's flute became visible over his smock-frock pocket, and Henery Fray exclaimed, "Surely, shepherd, I seed you blowing into a grate flute by-now at Casterbridge?"

"You did," said Gabriel, blushing faintly. "I've been in great trouble, neighbours, and was driven to it. I used not to be so poor as I be now."

"Never mind, heart!" said Mark Clark. "You should take it careless-like, shepherd, and your time will come. But we could thank ye for a tune, if ye bain't too tired?"

"Neither drum nor trumpet have I heard this Christmas," said Jan Coggan. "Come, raise a tune, Master Oak!"

"Ay, that I will," said Gabriel readily, pulling out his flute and putting it together. "A poor tool, neighbours; an everyday chap; but such as I can do ye shall have and welcome."

Oak then struck up "Jockey to the Fair," and played that sparkling melody three times through, accenting the notes in the third round in a most artistic and lively manner by bending his body in small jerks and tapping with his foot to beat time.

"He can blow the flute very well—that 'a can," said a young married man, who having no individuality worth mentioning was known as "Susan Tall's husband." He continued admiringly. "I'd as lief as not be able to blow into a flute as well as that."

"He's a clever man, and 'tis a true comfort for us to have such a shepherd," murmured Joseph Poorgress, in a soft and complacent cadence. "We ought to feel real thanksgiving that he's not a player of loose songs instead of these merry tunes; for 'twould have been just as easy for God to have made the shepherd a lewd low man—a man of iniquity, so to speak it—as what he is. Yes, for our wives' and daughters' sakes we should feel real thanksgiving."

"True, true, as the old woman said," dashed in Mark Clark conclusively, not feeling it to be of any consequence to his opinion that

he had only heard about a word and three-quarters of what Joseph had said.

"Yes," added Joseph, beginning to feel like a man in the Bible ; "for evil does thrive so in these times that ye may be as much deceived in the cleanest shaved and whitest shirted man as in the raggedest tramp upon the turnpike, if I may term it so."

"Ay, I can mind yer face now, shepherd," said Henery Fray, criticising Gabriel with misty eyes as he entered upon his second tune. "Yes—now I see ye blowing into the flute I know ye to be the same man I see play at Casterbridge, for yer mouth were scrimped up and yer eyes a-staring out like a strangled man's—just as they be now."

"'Tis a pity that playing the flute should make a man look such a scarecrow," observed Mr. Mark Clark, with additional criticism of Gabriel's countenance, the latter person jerking out unconcernedly, with the ghastly grimace required by the instrument, the chorus of "Dame Durden :"—

'Twas Moll' and Bet', and Doll' and Kate'
And Dor'-othy Drag'-gle Tail'.

"I hope you don't mind that young man Mark Clark's bad manners in naming your features ?" whispered Joseph to Gabriel privately.

"Not at all," said Mr. Oak.

"For by nature ye be a very handsome man, shepherd," continued Joseph Poorgrass, with winning suavity.

"Ay, that ye be, shepherd," said the company.

"Thank you very much," said Oak, in the modest tone good manners demanded, privately thinking, however, that he would never let Bathsheba see him playing the flute ; in this resolve showing a discretion equal to that related of its sagacious inventress, the divine Minerva herself.

"Ah, when I and my wife were married at Norcombe Church," said the old maltster, not pleased at finding himself left out of the subject, "we were called the handsomest couple in the neighbourhood—everybody said so."

"Danged if ye bain't altered now, maltster," said a voice, with the vigour natural to the enunciation of a remarkably evident truism. It came from the old man in the background, whose general offensiveness and spiteful ways were barely atoned for by the occasional chuckle he contributed to general laughs.

"Oh, no, no," said Gabriel.

"Don't ye play no more, shepherd," said Susan Tall's husband, the young married man who had spoken once before. "I must be moving, and when there's tunes going on I seem as if hung in wires. If I thought after I'd left that music was still playing and I not there, I should be quite melancholy-like."

"What's yer hurry then, Laban ?" inquired Coggan. "You used to bide as late as the latest."

"Well, ye see, neighbours, I was lately married to a woman, and she's my vocation now, and so ye see . . ." The young man halted lamely.

"New lords new laws, as the saying is, I suppose," remarked Coggan, with a very compressed countenance; that the frigidity implied by this arrangement of facial muscles was not the true mood of his soul being only discernible from a private glimmer in the outer corner of one of his eyes—this eye being nearly closed, and the other only half open.

"Ay, 'a b'lieve—ha, ha!" said Susan Tall's husband, in a tone intended to imply his habitual reception of jokes without minding them at all. The young man then wished them good-night and withdrew.

Henery Fray was the first to follow. Then Gabriel arose and went off with Jan Coggan, who had offered him a lodging. A few minutes later, when the remaining ones were on their legs and about to depart, Fray came back again in a hurry. Flourishing his finger ominously he threw a gaze teeming with tidings just where his glance alighted by accident, which happened to be in Joseph Poorgrass's eye.

"Oh—what's the matter, what's the matter, Henery?" said Joseph, starting back.

"What's a-brewing, Henery?" asked Jacob and Mark Clark.

"Baily Pennyways—Baily Pennyways—I said so; yes, I said so."

"What, found out stealing anything?"

"Stealing it is. The news is, that after Miss Everdene got home she went out again to see all was safe, as she usually do, and coming in found Baily Pennyways creeping down the granary steps with half a bushel of barley. She flewed at him like a cat—never such a tom-boy as she is—of course I speak with closed doors?"

"You do—your do, Henery."

"She flewed at him, and, to cut a long story short, he owned to having carried off five sack altogether, upon her promising not to persecute him. Well, he's turned out neck and crop, and my question is, who's going to be baily now?"

The question was such a profound one that Henery was obliged to drink there and then from the large cup till the bottom was distinctly visible inside. Before he had replaced it on the table, in came the young man, Susan Tall's husband, in a still greater hurry.

"Have ye heard the news that's all over parish?"

"About Baily Pennyways?"

"Ah—but besides that?"

"No—not a morsel of it!" they all replied, looking into the very midst of Laban Tall, and as it were, advancing their intelligence to meet his words half way down his throat.

"What a night of horrors!" murmured Joseph Poorgrass, waving his hands spasmodically. "I've had the news-bell ringing in my left ear quite bad enough for a murder, and I've seed a magpie all alone!"

"Fanny Robin—Miss Everdene's youngest servant—can't be found. They've been wanting to lock up the door these two hours, but she isn't come in. And they don't know what to do about going to bed for fear of locking her out. They wouldn't be so concerned if she hadn't

been noticed in such low spirits these last few days, and Maryann d' think the beginning of a crowner's inquest has happened to the poor girl."

"Oh—'tis burned—'tis burned!" said Joseph Poorgrass with dry lips.

"No—'tis drowned!" said Tall.

"Or 'tis her father's razor!" suggested Billy Smallbury, with a vivid sense of detail.

"Well—Miss Everdene wants to speak to one or two of us before we go to bed. What with this trouble about the bailly, and now about the girl, mis'ess is almost wild."

They all hastened up the rise to the farm-house, excepting the old maltster, whom neither news, fire, rain, nor thunder could draw from his hole. There, as the others' footsteps died away, he sat down again, and continued gazing as usual into the furnace with his red bleared eyes.

From the bedroom window above their heads Bathsheba's head and shoulders, robed in mystic white, were dimly seen extended into the air.

"Are any of my men among you?" she said anxiously.

"Yes, ma'am, several," said Susan Tall's husband.

"To-morrow morning I wish two or three of you to make inquiries in the villages round if they have seen such a person as Fanny Robin. Do it quietly; there is no reason for alarm as yet. She must have left whilst we were all at the fire."

"I beg yer pardon, but had she any young man courting her in the parish, ma'am?" asked Jacob Smallbury.

"I don't know," said Bathsheba.

"I've never heard of any such thing, ma'am," said two or three.

"It is hardly likely, either," continued Bathsheba. "For any lover of hers might have come to the house if he had been a respectable lad. The most mysterious matter connected with her absence—indeed, the only thing which gives me serious alarm—is that she was seen to go out of the house by Maryann with only her indoor working gown on—not even a bonnet."

"And you mean, ma'am, excusing my words, that a young woman would hardly go to see her young man without dressing up," said Jacob, turning his mental vision upon past experiences. "That's true—she would not, ma'am."

"She had, I think, a bundle, though I couldn't see very well," said a female voice from another window, which seemed to belong to Maryann. "But she had no young man about here. Hers lives in Casterbridge, and I believe he's a soldier."

"Do you know his name?" Bathsheba said.

"No, mistress; she was very close about it."

"Perhaps I might be able to find out if I went to Casterbridge barracks," said William Smallbury.

"Very well; if she doesn't return to-morrow, mind you go there and

try to discover which man it is, and see him. I feel more responsible than I should if she had had any friends or relations alive. I do hope she has come to no harm through a man of that kind. . . . And then there's this disgraceful affair of the bailiff—but I can't speak of him now."

Bathsheba had so many reasons for uneasiness that it seemed she did not think it worth while to dwell upon any particular one. "Do as I told you, then," she said in conclusion, closing the casement.

"Ay, ay, mistress ; we will," they replied, and moved away.

That night at Coggan's, Gabriel Oak, beneath the screen of closed eyelids, was busy with fancies, and full of movement, like a river flowing rapidly under its ice. Night had always been the time at which he saw Bathsheba most vividly, and through the slow hours of shadow he tenderly regarded her image now. It is rarely that the pleasures of the imagination will compensate for the pain of sleeplessness, but they possibly did with Oak to-night, for the delight of merely seeing effaced for the time his perception of the great difference between seeing and possessing.

He also thought of plans for fetching his few utensils and books from Norcombe. *The Young Man's Best Companion*, *The Farrier's Sure Guide*, *The Veterinary Surgeon*, *Paradise Lost*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Ash's Dictionary*, and *Walkingame's Arithmetic*, constituted his library ; and though a limited series, it was one from which he had acquired more sound information by diligent perusal than many a man of opportunities has done from a furlong of laden shelves.

The French Press.

III. THIRD PERIOD.

THE REIGN OF LOUIS XVI.

In a previous notice on the Press of France, during the reigns of Louis XIV. and XV.,* it was stated that the accession of Louis XVI. inaugurated the third era in French journalism. During the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century, newspapers had been engrossed by the disputes between Churchmen and Philosophers, and by the wrangles of the Philosophers with one another; at the death of Louis XV. the problems that began to engage and impassion men's minds were wholly political. This third era is by far the most important that has ever been passed through by the newspaper history of a people. At no time and in no country has journalism wielded such influence as in France during Louis XVI.'s reign; and the period merits close attention, as showing how a nation prepared itself for the greatest revolution which the world has seen, and also from what causes that revolution fell short of its main object.

Louis XVI. came to the throne in 1774, just a century ago, and his accession was hailed with the wildest outburst of national joy. Succeeding to a king who had brought France to the lowest point of degradation, and whose reign had been, in fact, in its latter years, an unbroken tale of corruption at home and disgrace abroad, he was exactly the prince to take a strong hold of popular affections. He was no more than twenty, and had none of the vices or even weaknesses of youth. Affable in manner, pure in his private life, fonder of lock-making than of court ceremonies, of reading than of sport, addicted to the companionship of learned and sensible men, he was known, moreover, to feel a deep sympathy for the miserable condition of the peasant classes, and to be resolved on doing his utmost to reduce taxation, alleviate pauperism, encourage trade, science, and education, and to reform abuses in Government. He began nobly by refusing the *don de joyeux avènement*, which was a gift of 5,000,000 francs made to kings on their accession; he abolished torture, suppressed the savage customs and feudal rights that still existed on the crown lands, issued a decree against press-gangs, recalled the Parliaments dissolved by Chancellor Maupeou in 1771: and—small matter as it may

* THE FRENCH PRESS, First and Second Periods, *Cornhill Magazine*, June and October, 1873.

appear now, though it was a grim affair then—paid a visit to the main sewer of Paris, which had been steadily poisoning people for the last fifty years, and ordered it to be roofed in at his own expense. At the same time he exiled from court the late King's mistress, the Milliner-Marchioness du Barry, and dismissed Louis XV.'s last ministers, the ferocious and half-lunatic Duke d'Aiguillon, Chancellor Maupeou above-said, who had sold justice and judicial appointments till he had amassed a plethoric fortune, and the execrated finance-minister, l'Abbé Terray, who had compared the people to an orange which must be squeezed. At the head of his new cabinet he placed the aged Count de Maurepas, who was much liked from having written an epigram against Mdme. de Pompadour, in 1749, and having incurred a fine and twenty years' exile in consequence. This Count was a frivolous old Frenchman, who made bad puns at the council table, but the new King had no means of suspecting this infirmity, for when M. de Maurepas had held office in his younger days he had greatly distinguished himself. At the age of twenty-four he had been appointed Secretary of State for the Navy and for the Royal Household, which included the administration of the city of Paris, and during the twenty years that his tenure of place lasted, he had done more good than any minister since the time of Colbert. Thus he had embellished Paris, shut up gambling-hells, repaved and relighted the streets, tried to cope with the same sewer which afterwards depressed Louis XVI.; and out of the navy funds had equipped several valuable scientific and geographical expeditions, amongst others those of La Condamine, Sévin, and Jussieu. To these achievements the Count added a grace of demeanour and a dashing kind of personal generosity, which had made him the pet of society when he was young, and sat well on him even in his old age, so that he seemed eminently fitted for the premiership, which Louis XVI. too guilelessly conferred on him. The two most important offices in the cabinet were at this juncture the Foreign Affairs and Finance departments, and M. de Maurepas filled up both posts well. The Foreign seals he gave to Count de Vergennes, a middle-aged diplomatist of consummate ability, and those of the Finance office to Count d'Ormesson, a square-headed nobleman of shining virtue. Writing to this colleague, under the King's dictation, Maurepas said: "Your appointment is a tribute which his Majesty pays to your great piety. . ." but, when he reached this word, the incorrigible Premier could not resist being facetious: he looked up and cried: "Ah, sire, this letter would never do for a circular." Now Louis XVI., who was desperately in earnest about his new cabinet, seemed puzzled at this joke. He had tried that all the fresh ministers should be square-headed; indeed, this was the first cabinet on record that contained no member under forty—and he answered Maurepas with surprise. However, the virtuous Count d'Ormesson only kept the Exchequer long enough to wish himself well out of it. At the end of four weeks he handed over the embarrassed ledgers of the kingdom to Baron Turgot, a man as virtuous as himself, and renowned for his many works on political economy.

The newspapers of Paris read at this time like a chorus of hymns. It was so new to the French to have a king and ministers busying themselves about the people, from other motives than to saddle them with more taxes, that journalists appeared to gasp for superlatives enthusiastic enough to paint the state of their feelings. The terms "idolised monarch," "son of St. Louis," "father of the nation," were constantly cropping up, and the young sovereign was compared to those too few good beings whom antiquity and legendry have furnished, for it was a lettered age strong in its classics and mythology. The venerable Voltaire wrote from Ferney that Sesostrius had come back to earth again; sulky J. J. Rousseau, lately returned to Paris from his foreign rambles, admitted that there was some hope of cure for diseased France under the altered state of things, and even at that stronghold of literary philistinism, the Café Procope, authors became loyal for a season. It had been the custom under Louis XV. for the frequenters of this café to use a slang dialect of their own for fear of police spies. Talking of religion, they would say *Javotte*, and of Government *Jeanneton* (from Jeanne du Barry); they also had a stock joke which consisted in sneezing when the King's name was pronounced, a way of implying that they could find nothing better to say of so worthy a prince. All these precautions and pleasantries ceased now, and young M. de Beaumarchais could chalk up boldly, as he did, over the stove of the café: "No dogs or police-spies allowed here. The Ex-Minister Terray may be brought in led by a string."*

There were then twenty-eight well established journals in the capital, and it may help to give a better idea of the means which public opinion had for expressing itself, if we subjoin a list of them with their yearly subscription prices. It will be noticed that these prices are, for the most part, much lower than those of London papers at the same date, because of the absence of stamp duty. Stamps were imposed on English papers so early as the reign of Queen Anne, and in 1774, when the duty stood at one penny for every copy, the average price of a London journal was three-pence. In 1775, Lord North raised the duty to three-halfpence, and in 1789 another halfpenny was added, which brought the ordinary price to fourpence. In 1797, a new addition of 1½d. occurred, and papers then attained what, to a French public, would have seemed the prohibitive cost of 6d. Newspapers in France were not taxed till the Consulate in 1799, and up to that time plenty of journals were started, and sold well at one sou the copy.

Those flourishing in 1774 were:—

Gazette de France, official, published twice a week, with occasional extra supplements, 12 frs. annually; *Journal des Savants*, non-political, 14

* It is fair to note that there were one or two dissentients, who refused to share the general exhilaration at the new king's coming. Louis XVI. did not like music, and being at the opera soon after his accession, had the hardihood to go out during a violin quartet. "Ah, grand Dieu!" cried one French fiddler turning to another, "*quel règne se prepare!*"

numbers a year, 16 frs. ; *Mercur*, political and literary, fortnightly 24 frs. ; *Petites Affiches*, a weekly journal of advertisements with a literary supplement, containing amongst other things mock advertisements of a satirical kind, 48 frs. ; *Année Littéraire*, *Catalogue Hebdomadaire*, *Courrier d'Arignon*, *Journal de Politique et de Littérature*, *Journal Français*, *Journal de Lecture*, *Gazette Parisienne*, *Journal Historique*, *Courrier Général*, and *Gazette de Monsieur*, all weekly, political, and literary papers, ranging in price from 9 to 18 frs. a year ;* *Nouvelles de Cour*, *Année Littéraire*, *Espagne Littéraire*, *Journal de Verdun*, political, polemical, and satirical, all four published twice a week, with frequent supplements, 18 or 20 frs. a year ; *Causeur de Paris* and *Spectateur Français*, fortnightly reviews, which did not give news, 24 frs. ; *Journal des Théâtres*, *Gazette des Tribunaux*, *Journal des Causes Célèbres*, *Journal des Dames*, *Journal de Santé*, *Journal de Médecine et de Physique*, *Journal Ecclésiastique*, *Journal des Beaux Arts*, scientific, professional, or artistic periodicals, published monthly at prices varying from 9 to 24 frs. The *Journal des Dames* was extremely frivolous, and even improper, but much bought. The medical papers were both excellent, and the two law papers began in 1774 to criticise, as well as report, the important decisions of judges, a thing which would have been punished as contempt of Court under Louis XV.

In addition to these journals, there were about twenty others published abroad for circulation in France. They mostly appeared twice a week for the yearly price of 48 frs., and being bolder than those of Paris, found a much larger sale. Louis XVI. decreed that they should have free access to the kingdom, and instead of being read in holes and corners they forthwith appeared in the cafés, on the Augustine's Quay, which was a book-mart and a place of airing for literary folk, and round the Innocents' Churchyard where journalists congregated. As to the cafés, most of them made it their business to take in specially the papers published in one or other foreign country ; and thus the now famous *Café Anglais* owed its name to the fact that the principal London periodicals were to be found there, and also a Parisian *Journal Anglais*, which gave garbled translations from the British press, and first taught the French to spell *my lord* with an i.

Here are some extracts which will give a key-note to the tone of the French press during the opening period of Louis XVI.'s reign. The first is from the *Mercur*, November, 1774 :—

Our well-beloved king refused the *don de joyeux avènement* which, God knows, would never have better deserved its name than if his Majesty had deigned to accept it ; our Queen, whose generous heart reflects all the virtues of her Royal Consort,

* The weekly papers did not all appear on the same days. The favourite publishing day was Sunday, but a paper of some sort was issued every day of the week, so that Paris really boasted a daily press, though the first regular daily journal was only started in 1777.

has likewise declined to accept the customary gift called Queen's Girdle (*Ceinture de la Reine*). It was an old, reverent, and touching usage, that of offering girdle money to a new queen, but her Majesty, having learned that the custom (which took its rise some centuries ago in spontaneous contributions) had degenerated into a tax weighing on the poorest classes of the kingdom, her Majesty said : "I wish for no other girdle than the love of the king's subjects." Cornelia did not speak more nobly when she showed her children, and exclaimed, "Those are my jewels;" and M. le Comte de Coutourelle has appropriately expressed the national gratitude in the following lines, which he tendered to the Queen at Sunday's levee :

" Vous renoncez, charmante Souveraine,
Aux plus beaux revenus :
À quoi vous servirait la 'Ceinture de la Reine ?'
Vous avez celle de Vénus."

The *Journal des Dames* of a month later describes a visit paid by Marie Antoinette to the Mint. A medal is shown her with the Virgin's image on one side and her own portrait on the other :

"But there is no inscription!" remarked her Majesty to the Duke de Nivernais. "There was no need of one, Madame," answered the Duke; "People will naturally exclaim at seeing the Virgin, '*Ave Maria*,' and when they turn to your Majesty's likeness, '*gratiâ plena*.'"

In the *Gazette de France*, January, 1775, we have this tit-bit under the heading of Foreign Intelligence.

Lisbon, December.—King Joseph I. of Portugal has an equal regard for wit and for the maxims of absolute despotism, so that the former passion sometimes tempers the excesses of the latter. The other night the Marquis of Ponteleina was discussing with his Majesty the delicate question of Royal prerogative, and he contended that there should be limits to a king's power; his Majesty asserted that there should be none; "I only mean, sire, such limits as reason itself would suggest," protested the Marquis respectfully. "There should be no limits, and reason has nothing to do with it," replied the King; "if I were to order you to fling yourself into the sea you ought to do it instantly." The Marquis bowed, and turned to leave the room. "Where are you going?" asked the King, astonished. "I am going to take swimming lessons, Sire," rejoined M. de Ponteleina, which made the King laugh, and put an end to a debate which had its perils. This reminds one of Peter the Great visiting Frederick IV. of Denmark, and being led by him to the summit of the Round Tower at Copenhagen. "Shall I give you an example of my absolute authority," said Peter, and turning to a Cossack in his suite, he pointed to the abyss below the tower and cried "Jump." The Cossack saluted his master, and jumped without a word. "There," said the Czar quietly, "has your Majesty any subjects like that?" "Happily not," answered Frederick IV., with a shudder; and we can imagine a similar horror filling the breast of our own Louis XVI. at the recital of such abuses in power. Thrice blessed the people whose king enforces no other laws than those of sense and justice! Thrice blessed the monarch who knows that there is a King who sits above earthly kings and judges their acts!

The papers were much taken up at this time with details about reforms introduced at Court. Louis XVI. objected to dress and undress in the presence of a crowd of noblemen, and he thought there was no need of a duke to hand him his bedgown, or of an equally illustrious peer of France to tie the string of his nightcap. He ordered that the courtiers

should only be admitted to pay him their respects after he had left his dressing-room: Again, there was a body of pages, who were brought to Court young, and passed their lives in ante-chambers, and in the boudoirs of ladies-in-waiting, and maids-of-honour, where they picked up all the vices, and no qualities worth mentioning. To the disgust of these young gentlemen, the King directed that their education should be attended to, and that when not actually on duty they should be forbidden to hang about the palace apartments. What led to this distasteful measure was the following incident, drolly narrated in the *Journal de Verdun* :—

On New Year's Day (1775) the High Court of the Parliament of Paris proceeded to Versailles to pay their respects to his Majesty, and were shown into the Galerie des Glaces, where they sat down waiting till the King should enter. A page who stood behind M. le Premier President, thought the opportunity a good one for displaying his talents, so tied a string to the President's wig, the other end being fastened to a chandelier. On the entrance of his Majesty the Court rose, and the President stepped forward, but his wig remaining suspended in mid-air he stood revealed in all his baldness, to the amusement of her Majesty's ladies, who, despite the King's seriousness, could not refrain from smiling. When the Parliament had retired the King called up the page and commanded him to go and apologise to the President ; but here began a new freak, for the page, instead of starting off on the spot, delayed the business till midnight. He arrived, galloping on horseback, and escorted by two other pages and by his servants to the street where the President lived, and the whole thoroughfare was startled out of sleep by the noise of the horses, and by the furious knocking at the door. When the President's servants hurried to answer the summons the page alighted, and said proudly "Special order of the King !" whereupon the President was roused from his bed, and dressed himself hastily in his robes of ceremony, wondering what could be the matter. He descended to his drawing-room, which the servants had meanwhile lighted as if for a festival, and found the small page, who said demurely, "Monsieur, I have come by his Majesty's orders to beg pardon for having strung up your wig." It was a good joke, but his Majesty's reflection on it was that his pages had too much spare time on their hands, and that is why they are for the future to be taught Latin and mathematics.

The King, in his honest zeal for improvements, tried to diminish the head-dresses of ladies, which, under the Queen's auspices, had began towering to a fabulous height. At the first Carnival ball of 1775 Marie Antoinette's hair was piled up in a fabric two feet high ; but nothing could be more chivalrous than Louis XVI.'s rebuke of the extravagance. On the morrow he sent his wife a splendid egret of diamonds, telling her it would please him better to see her wear "this simple adornment, though if she but could see herself as others saw her she would recognise that art was not needed to make her beautiful." The papers were mightily pleased at this, for they had been attacking the fashionable headdresses, with some warmth ; but it is scarcely necessary to observe that the King only succeeded in checking the upward growth of ladies' hair for three months or so. Marie Antoinette accepted the egret, but she added it to the high fabric which it had been intended to suppress, and so the fashion was rendered doubly expensive. Louis XVI. was more successful in battling with one of those snug little abuses which one must always remember

lovingly in thinking of the good old times. Let us listen to what *Mercure* says, February, 1775:—

M. de Turgot, the Controller of Finances, came three weeks ago to the King and said he had discovered in the household expenses an item of 40,000fr. (1,600*l.*) annually for the Clerk of the Red Room Bottle. He said no one could explain to him on what pretext this money was drawn. Inquiries were set afoot, and it was discovered that in 1677 Louis XIV. had assigned the Red Room on the third storey, at the angle of the Cour de Neptune at Versailles, to the officer of the guard on duty, and directed that a bottle of wine should be placed there every evening to refresh him. The king had said one bottle—the groom of the cellar put down two in his accounts, and entered the charge at 10fr. a day. Presently up rose a clerk, who contended that as this item was not set down in the ordinary columns of the Civil List it must be registered with a special fee. He and the groom managed it between them; down went four bottles a day, and the clerk and his friend each continued to draw their 3,650fr. a year very regularly till they grew old and sold their places for the capital value of the income. By this time new arrangements had been made for the officers of the guard, and the Red Room was given up to a bed-chamber lady, who drank no wine. Nevertheless, the bottle, which was no longer supplied, got to be charged 30,000fr. annually, for the prices of commodities were rising. Cardinal Dubois, who was ever of an economic turn of mind, investigated this abuse and wisely suppressed one of the recipients of the bottle-money, but as the other recipient was loyal to him, he raised his salary to 20,000fr. Forty years later the Abbé Terray followed in the same wake, and appointed Count de Kerday Clerk of the Red Room Bottle at a fixed salary of 2,000 louis. Now M. de Kerday is twenty-five years old, and Colonel of the Regiment Royal Lorraine. He has receipts to prove that he paid Controller Terray 500,000fr. for the post; but it is hoped that in consideration of his having drawn his 40,000fr. for now four years he may be induced to resign on repayment of the 500,000fr. with another 100,000 thrown in for good luck. The King's Secretary has written to him about it.

In the same number, which shows up this little affair, we have it announced that the king desires to reform the management of prisons. Prisoners are to have their straw changed at least once a week, and are to be classed as much as possible according to their offences, murderers being kept aloof from apprentices who have simply broken a street lamp, and women of evil reputation from little girls who have been arrested because they have no homes. Then follows advice from the Lieutenant of Police cautioning newspaper vendors against going into the pits of play-houses to hawk their journals, "not that the King would throw any impediments in the way of newspaper sale, but because the hawkers too often forget the respect they owe to the spectators, and fight with one another." To this the *Mercure's* editor adds, pathetically, "One of our hawkers got his head punched at the Comédie Française the other night by a crier of the *Journal de Verdun*. If the man wanted a heavy weapon he would have done better to ply a copy of the paper he was endeavouring so ineffectually to sell; but does the *Journal de Verdun* want to persuade us that its literature is strong because its criers are hard-fisted? If so it should advertise: 'Articles, puns, and pleasantries by the man with the flat nose—the same who assaults the *Mercure's* servants and gets kicked now and then for a change.'" The number winds up with a squib, which

well sums up the contentment of a time when the confidence in the new king was universal, and when no graver matter disturbed the public peace than the budding quarrel between the partizans of the composer Gluck and those of his rival Piccini:—

Somebody was twitting the Curé of the Church of St. Gèneviève, who during the late King's illness had offered up noisy prayers on his behalf. "What do you mean by calling the prayers useless?" asked this holy man. "Didn't the King die?"

II.

All this was very well for a beginning, but the hey-day did not last long. One's object in dwelling on the early portion of Louis XVI.'s reign is to record the strange contrast between that period and the events which followed. No king ever commenced better than Louis XVI., but a sterner man than he was needed to face the difficulties that were looming ahead in serried numbers. First and foremost was the financial difficulty. The King had said, on calling Turgot to office, "We must see how we can possibly reduce our debts;" to which Turgot had pithily replied, "The present question is not how we may reduce the national debt, sire, but how we may increase it," and this was just true, for there was a dead lock in money matters. On one side were the trading and working classes, who were overtaxed, and on the other the nobility and clergy, who possessed two-thirds of the land in France, and yet were not taxed at all. Turgot proposed several small measures to stave off pressing wants, and then applied himself to the elaboration of a complete scheme of financial reform. But priests and nobles got wind of his intentions, and it may be said that from that moment the train of the Revolution was laid, for they resolved to oppose him at every step, to harass, discredit, and overthrow him. After all they were but acting as privileged classes ever will when they have not an iron hand to deal with them. Turgot was honest, able, and resolute, but he was weak, for he worked under the orders of a Prime Minister, who had no notion of tilting against the whole nobility, and under a king who had not nerve enough to dismiss Maurepas and back up Turgot, as Louis XIV. had backed up Colbert and Louis XIII. Richelieu. If Turgot had been as unscrupulous as he was clever, he might have got rid of Maurepas by intrigue, and rendered glorious service to both king and country. But he ignored the tricks of statecraft—tricks so useful at times—and instead of overawing or finessing with the obstructive prelates and peers, he was simple enough to appeal to their patriotism and their good sense, so that they laughed in his face, and what is more, took heart to resist him without flinching. The Red Room Bottle Man was but one of a class whose name was legion, and all his brother sinecurists had quaked when his particular case was being examined. There was jobbery, corruption, and extortion high and low on all branches of the administrative tree. Every office in the state had been sold under the late reign, and the titulants naturally tried to re-coup themselves for their outlay by

systematic plunder. The commonest formalities of civilised life, commercial exchanges, sales, the hiring of a shop, the purchase of a field, the inheriting of a legacy, were each and all fenced in with fees and restrictions so formidable, that Beaumarchais remarked that he doubted whether he could stand on his head in the middle of a road without having to bribe the Provost of Paris, fee the police, corrupt the parish beadle, and then enter into a compromise with three or four of the bystanders in order to avoid a law-suit. To crown all, the taxes, customs, excise, and post-office were farmed out to shameless gangs of speculators, who blocked up every avenue to progress, and were constantly wresting new monopolies from the embarrassed Government, or rather from the dozen or so of loose women who virtually ruled the land. The state of things was such that towards the close of his reign Louis XV. had been utterly unable to dispose of a single salaried appointment. Hearing one day that one of the sub-masters of the Royal hounds was making it a practice to remove the best head of deer from the Crown chases to stock his own forests, he asked his favourite huntsman to pick up irrefutable evidence of the fact, in order that the sub-master might be disgraced. The huntsman answered bluffly that if he did this he should lose his place. "Oh, but I will see to that," answered the King, nettled, and the unlucky man, rather out of obedience than from confidence in the royal word, denounced the sub-master and was dismissed from his place the same day. "I did not know the man was so strong, my poor fellow," said Louis XV. shyly to the huntsman, "but it seems there will be no money whatsoever for our hunting if he is displeased. His people farm all my woods and rivers, and he has half-a-dozen duchesses behind him." The huntsman submitted that it was sad to be beggared for doing his duty, and the King assenting, signed him an appointment to a place in the Customs, but three weeks later the man returned again, saying his commission was worth so much waste paper. "I'll tell you how to manage," exclaimed the King, impatiently, and doing violence for once to his natural stinginess, he unlocked a drawer and drew out a roll of fifty louis. "You make a present of this to Madame Desparbes's maid. Madame Desparbes is the mistress of the chief clerk in the Customs, and if you bribe the maid, the mistress will see that the clerk obeys my orders." This roundabout method of exerting the royal prerogative succeeded.

Now when affairs have lapsed into this condition the accession of a new king, however well-intentioned, does not put them straightway to rights. At first the sinecurists, monopolists, hectoring clerks and others hid their heads like frightened rats; but as soon as the first gust of change had blown by they came out of their holes, and Turgot found them swarm up everywhere as triumphant as ever to his hindrance and confusion. He could make no way because of them; whichever side he turned he saw his passage barred by a cluster of vested interests. The Court being at Fontainebleau in 1775 the Prince de Ligne asked Marie Antoinette, one night, if she would play at cards. "I have only six

louis," answered the queen, "and shall have no more till the end of the week, so I must economise." The next day the prince accosted Marie Antoinette joyfully and said he supposed she had procured money sooner than she expected, for he had just seen a van marked *Queen's Treasury* start for Paris with four horses, two postilions, six outriders, a troop of cavalry, and two clerks, all of which would have been superfluous for the conveyance of 120 francs. "Yet there was no more in the van," replied Marie Antoinette, ruefully. "The Queen's Treasury always travels so since the time of Marie Leczinska and you know what storms the least talk of retrenchment excites." Honest Turgot was present when this answer was made, and he took the occasion of drawing aside the Prince of Rohan Guemenée—the same who in 1783 became bankrupt for the trifle of 33,000,000 francs—and said: "It will cost about five thousand francs to convey those six *louis* to Paris. I ask you, my lord, what will become of France if you and your brother-landowners do not help me to extricate us from this mess?" "Tut, tut," chirruped the prince, flipping some snuff off his frill. "Crack your head with figures if you like, my dear Baron, but don't interfere with us or the clergy. We're all poor as mice; my estates are mortgaged a foot thick, and I don't know of a bishop who hasn't put his crozier in pawn. The only people who can afford taxes are the trade-folk and labourers;" and perceiving that Turgot still persisted in wishing to haul his country out of the pit, this Prince de Guemenée and others mocked at him, and instructed their salaried newspapers to mock him as a visionary and a simpleton. The nobility and clergy had of course many ways of raising a press-outcry against an objectionable politician. Not counting the journals which were actually their own, there were plenty of others ever ready to sell themselves for pecuniary or social favours; and behind these came the ruck of papers whose conductors were too ignorant to understand a man of Turgot's stamp. Turgot was no charlatan, and hated clap-trap. If he had begun at once with sensational measures and made a great noise about them he might have been comprehended of the people; but as his plans were deep, steady, searching reforms, which would have operated slowly, though surely, his enemies had no difficulty in persuading the masses that he had no ideas of reform at all. After two years of ceaseless, struggling disappointment and humiliation Turgot resigned in 1776, and his place was taken by the Swiss banker and economist Necker.

Then it was that matters first began to assume a serious aspect. The people were glad to see Turgot fall, but they were not so blind as to ignore that the nobility had banded together to oppose all innovations whatever; and perhaps one of their reasons for despising Turgot was that he had not had the spirit to override the nobles and put his measures, if he had any, forcibly to the test. Necker was a popular man, and the public showed unmistakeable signs that they expected firmness of him. Insensibly one can note a diminution in the respect of newspapers towards constituted authorities from this time. The papers do not attack the king

and queen, but they adopt a free tone as regards the farmers-general of taxes, the judges and bishops, and they speak in very plain terms about the bigger abuses of government. One must not look for exhaustive leading articles, but the papers are full of those short, crisp paragraphs which Frenchmen pen so well, and which turn disagreeable things and persons into ridicule. Day after day the press teemed with column upon column of these pithy epigrams, and anecdotes, many of them untrue no doubt, but all funny, and spiteful enough to make the most thick-skinned victims wince. It was like a fine spray of salt water splashed at people in power, and when the spray had drenched minor placemen it began to wet the courtiers and ministers, and principally M. de Maurepas. That venerable premier was surprised at this. He had been punning serenely all this time, and could not understand the altered spirit that had come over the country. Much like an English Whig in feeling, M. de Maurepas meant well, but thought the nation had all it needed, once he was in office. Those twenty years he had passed successfully as a minister in the prime of life had been the spoiling of him. If a minister rules well from twenty to forty it seems to be admitted that he can begin again as if he were the same man and as if the world were the same five and twenty years afterwards; and M. de Maurepas was not the first, nor has he been the last, politician who fancied that age had wrought no difference in him nor in the rest of mankind. When the Press assailed him he concluded that journalism was being stricken with a passing madness, and he resolved to doctor it with the specifics familiar to him in his youth. He submitted to the king a decree for the appointment of seventy censors, who were to revise all books and periodicals before they were published; and to lay an embargo on foreign journals when they exceeded the liberty allowed to native prints.

Louis XVI. signed this decree without reluctance. He, too, having blown off his first whiff of reform zeal and being anxious for some rest, felt uneasy and shocked by the clamour of the newspapers. He was much in the mood of a man who exclaims: "I gave that beggar a penny two years ago, and he is not yet satisfied!" It seemed to him unreasonable that men should be so eager to move on whilst he desired to sit still a while; and his courtiers were repeating to him so profusely that he had done more for his people than any king before him, that he believed this to be true, not being able to remember a historical precedent to the contrary. So the press decree was launched to kennel journalists, as it were, until the time should come when they might with more propriety give tongue again; but never was decree so ill-obeyed nor so derisively greeted. It excited an Homeric laugh from one end of Paris to the other, and the circumstance should have warned the Court that it was no longer a tame multitude that peopled the capital. To begin with, ministers found it impossible to get seventy presentable censors. There had been censors under Louis XV., but the press was inclined to be obedient then; in the new temper of the public mind the office was

thought to be ignominious, and the "Six Dozen minus Two," as the board got to be called, were poor literary hacks on whom newspaper editors proceeded forthwith to play every variety of practical jokes. The *Journal de Verdun* and three other periodicals, which were allotted one censor between them, made him disgracefully drunk on the first day of his functions and constrained him to sign a solemn statement that he was a fool—which declaration was printed in conspicuous type on the front page of all four papers. The *Mercury* got a censor who stammered, and reports of his conversations were faithfully given from week to week as pronounced; but at the end of the month he effected an exchange and became censor to the two medical papers, "the which," remarked the *Mercury*, "will thus have an opportunity of combining benevolence with amusement, by first listening to the poor devil and then curing him." These pleasantries were not all allowed to pass off unpunished; but another ominous symptom of the times was that the Parliament of Paris refused to inflict any heavier penalty than fines upon press delinquents. M. de Maurepas had recourse to the Bastille in a few instances; but the insubordination was growing too general and too defiant for this to be of much avail. The quarrel between the Gluckists and the Piccinists added much to the perplexities of government. Under pretence of praising Piccini's music, journalists of the popular party made furious onslaughts on all the admirers of Gluck, who was the Court favourite; and, however transparent the allusions might be, it was difficult to punish such squibs as the following, which appeared in the *Journal Politique* for May 1776:—

Very dull music Monsieur Gluck's, perhaps dangerous music too. They say good music inspires noble resolutions; bad music, then, may do the contrary. Supposing a Farmer-General after listening to an act of *Zenobia* (by Piccini) were to find tears in his eyes, stand up in his box and shout to a delighted pit: "I am a rogue, but I'll make restitution?" The supposition is preposterous we know, but this is spring time and we can afford to be imaginative. Supposing then a robber—we beg pardon, a Farmer-General—did this, who would doubt the power of harmony? But Farmers-General prefer Gluck. They listen to *Iphigénie en Aulide*, and dream of new taxes. The screeching and squalling of those German notes reminds them pleasurably of some unfortunate family of peasants yelling and tearing their hair whilst the collector is walking off with their last cow. No music could be sweeter to a Farmer-General, but why is M. de Maurepas so fond of Gluck?

Marie Antoinette was fond of Gluck too; but the papers continued to respect her, it being apparently their object to dissociate the Royal Family from the Court nobility, and to make the nation believe that the King was being prevented by his advisers from doing all the good he wished. In one or two of the foreign papers, however, some ill-natured comments might be read on the Queen's extravagance and the King's vacillating disposition, and this gave the "Six Dozen minus Two" an occasional opportunity of retrieving their character with the native press. The Parisian papers bore no love towards the more outspoken French journals, published abroad for home circulation, for these prints interfered considerably with

their profits, and the only fault found with the Censors was that they frequently gave their visa to foreign matter, more subversive than would have been sanctioned at home. The journalist * Mercier explained this by saying that Censors could only read Paris print.

We now reach the middle of the year 1776, when two highly important events occurred, which had a strong indirect influence in preparing the Revolution. The one was the establishment of the *Courrier de l'Europe* in London; the other a violent collision between the Ministry and the most distinguished journalist of the day, Simon Nicolas Linguet.

III.

Nicolas Linguet, as he was commonly called, was born in 1736. He was a man of energetic character, bold, clever, but without a particle of conscience. His inward vocation prompted him towards literature even when he was a schoolboy; but finding how shabbily paid were most votaries of the pen, he entered the Bar, for, as he said to the Prince of Beauvau, who took an interest in him: "The great point is to become rich, my lord; I don't see any other object in life, and I don't suppose you do." His forensic success was rapid and most startling, for instead of employing the stilted and pompous forms of oratory then in vogue, he spoke as men do now-a-days, but with a fiery, brazen eloquence all his own. As the inaugurator of the modern style of French rhetoric, he was the actual precursor of Mirabeau; and other barristers were soon obliged to copy his language, though the old ones protested in disgust, and even sought to check him at first, urging that his colloquial phraseology was not decent. Linguet had not his equal for "getting up" a case, and surrounding it with such dramatic accessories as were most likely to tell on the minds of French judges. A beautiful lady, Madame de Bethune, having brought an action about some land against the Marshal Duke de Broglie (great grandfather of the present Duke), Linguet was retained for the plaintiff. But on seeing his client, he said: "You are so lovely, Madame, that your face is worth a speech in itself. What I'll do is this: I will write you a speech, and you shall learn it by heart, and rehearse it to me, dressed in a light-blue silk gown, the colour best suited to your style of beauty. If you deliver it correctly, as I direct you, I defy any bench of Frenchmen to find for the defendant."

This was accordingly done. Madame de Bethune's speech took seven hours in delivery, and caused a most theatrical sensation. The lady had an excellent memory. She had learned her part well, and her demeanour, voice, and gestures were all such as a first-rate actress might have envied. It was so evident that she had won the hearts of the judges, that when the court adjourned for dinner, midway in the speech, the irascible Marshal

* The term "journalist" must now be understood to mean any writer employed on the press. The term "gazetteer" fell out of use in Louis XVI.'s reign, for the old *journals*, which had been forbidden to treat of politics under Louis XV., became political with the new reign, and stood on the same footing as the *gazettes*.

de Broglie sought out Linguet in the Pleaders' Hall, and, shaking a cane in his face, said: "Just you make your client speak her own words, and not yours, Master Linguet, or it will be the worse for you—do you hear?"

Linguet's reply was at once the most delicate compliment to his opponent's renowned valour and the proudest personal retort. He made a low bow, and answered: "My lord, you have taught Frenchmen never to fear their enemies; and I mean to remember the lesson."

So long as Linguet confined himself to exploits of this sort, he had only to contend against the professional jealousies which beset every man who shoots ahead of his colleagues. But he was a person who could not be happy unless he was up to his neck in quarrels. He ferretted out a number of abuses at the Bar, and began to expose them; not because he disliked abuses, but because it pleased him to wreak his malice on some of the big-wigs who had affronted him at starting. The results of this bit of bravado were deplorable. In no time Linguet found all his brother barristers arrayed against him. He had no friends, for, looking at the Bar as a mere stepping stone to higher honours, he adopted an insufferably arrogant line with all his gowned brethren, and missed no occasion of expressing his contempt for them. He was an exquisite, who wore silk breeches, cambric ruffles, and diamond buckles to his shoes; and it was well known that numerous noble ladies whom he had served professionally protected and petted him. Linguet was cautioned that if he did not keep a watch over his tongue, he would be sent to Coventry. He shrugged his shoulders, broke out into denunciations more violent than before, and was disbarred.

Then his name filled everybody's mouth, for it was justly felt that the Bar had lost its most brilliant member. The French for disbarred is *rayé*, which also as applied to stuffs means *striped*; and all the shop windows blossomed out with *rayé* goods, handkerchiefs, shawls, coats, head-dresses, &c., *à la Linguet*. The *furor* which Henri Rochefort excited in France five years ago, recalls the Linguet mania, and indeed there are many points of resemblance between Linguet's career and Rochefort's. The publisher, Panckoucke, who was trying to secure a newspaper monopoly by buying up all the journals with a good circulation, instantly enlisted the disbarred advocate, and seeing that Linguet would not consent to write under editorial supervision, founded a special paper for him—the *Journal de Bruxelles*—which, according to the prevalent custom, was supposed to be published abroad. Linguet was disbarred in 1774; the *Journal de Bruxelles* was launched in January, 1775, and for eighteen months it was by far the most popular paper in Paris, but a wild, spiteful, inconsistent paper. Linguet was no liberal. He preached what Grimm called "Asiatic despotism," and covered the King and Queen—especially the Queen—with flowery compliments, which sometimes broke out in rhyme. On the other hand, starting from the notion that abuses in Government reflect discredit on the Sovereign, and are consequently proofs of disloyalty

and treason in those who commit them, he assailed, in the King's name, every placeman and institution in the State. This it was that made the success of his paper. The people could not follow him in its abstruse political theories, but they relished his hard-hitting, and cheered him joyfully whenever he appeared in public. Linguet was foremost among those who reviled Turgot for an incapable dunce, and there was no end to the irony which he lavished upon the crowd of political quacks who started up every day with plans for universal reform. "I know but of one plan of universal reform," he wrote in November, 1775, "and that would consist in braining twenty monopolists, unfrocking two cart-loads of bishops, and hanging all the Farmers-General with their heads downwards round the Place de Grève. When I had done that, I would take the forty members of the Academy, reduce their servile writings to pulp, and make them swallow the trash with a spoon." Now this style of writing was not calculated to make Linguet beloved in respectable quarters. His blow at the Academy was owing to the fact that he had petitioned to enter that body, but had been rejected in favour of La Harpe, whom, as a representative of humdrum literature—"that tasteless prose which sticks in the mouth like paste"—he peculiarly abhorred. Panckoucke, Linguet's proprietor, entreated him to spare the Academy because he (Panckoucke) was much beholden to divers of its members, and Marie Antoinette, who secretly enjoyed the paper which spoke so kindly of herself, sent privately to beg the bubbling editor not to get into scrapes from which it would be impossible to extricate him. But Linguet, though flattered by the Queen's solicitude, paid no heed to it, and as to Panckoucke, he disposed of him in these terms:—"I am not your servant, Monsieur Panckoucke, and if you happen to forget the fact, I'll settle my account with you in the Bois de Boulogne." The publisher was no craven, but his *Journal de Bruxelles* was selling remarkably well, and business profits were of course a consideration. However, in July, 1776, Linguet poured out such a very flood of vitriolic invective over La Harpe, the Academy and all authors, journalists, and men generally who had any respect for that body, that the Academicians appealed in a body to the High Chancellor, Miromesnil, for justice. The Chancellor was only too glad of a pretext for extinguishing Linguet on a seemingly non-political offence. The Queen pleaded for the intemperate journalist, and had half-disposed the King to be merciful, but Miromesnil came and remonstrated, exclaiming, "He has distributed his kicks among us all like a wild jackass let loose"; and Louis XVI. on reading the incriminated article declared that it was an outrage on truth and honesty. So the measure of Linguet's iniquities was full; and Panckoucke was ordered to dismiss him, and Linguet, to avoid the Bastille, fled to London. It was generally considered a graceless act on Panckoucke's part that he should have handed over the vacant editorship of Linguet's paper to La Harpe, who had been the cause of all this hubbub, and was Linguet's worst enemy.

It was a blunder on the part of Government to banish Linguet. He

was so irrational and unscrupulous a writer that his popularity must have quickly worn itself out, had he been suffered to live unmolested. Persecution set him on a pedestal, and when he began to issue from his London lodging, in the Strand, a weekly pamphlet called *Annales*, not all the watchfulness of the Customs' officers could prevent it from finding its way to Paris and being ravenously devoured there. It is not necessary to follow Linguet's career step by step from this time, for the adventures of political victims are alike in all countries, and form an old story. Wiled back to France by a false friend, who was paid by Government to betray him, he was thrown into the Bastille, and remained there two years, employing his angry leisure in preparing materials for those famous *Memoires de la Bastille*, which came as the first blow of the pickaxe on the old state prison. On his release, in 1780, Linguet went abroad again, and once more plunged into newspaper war. Storm clouds were gathering ominously then, and every shot fired by the spleenful writer against the tottering upholders of misrule told heavily. For all this, when the Revolution actually broke out, Linguet declared himself against it, and returning to France was guillotined for his royalist zeal in 1794. There was something incongruous and almost grotesque in this climax; for it was Linguet's pen that had put the people's grievances into words; and when the Revolutionary Committee sentenced him to death they did so quoting one of his own writings: "L'ami des Tyrans est l'ennemi du genre humain."

IV.

At the time of Linguet's first exile from France, the *Courrier de l'Europe*, already mentioned, was being founded in London under curiously humble circumstances, considering the great part which it was destined to play in French journalism. A Gascon, named Serre de Latour, who, as a married man with children, had thought it good to elope with a friend's wife, had taken refuge in London, where, money failing him, he entered into relations with one Swinton, and proposed to start a paper of a new sort. The American War of Independence had just broken out, and Frenchmen were much interested in the struggle of the British colonies for freedom; they also took a lively interest in things British generally, for animosity was strong between the two countries, which were for ever coming to loggerheads. Latour suggested that a great service might be rendered to the French Government and people by laying bare before them the weaknesses of Great Britain—her parliamentary wrangles, administrative corruption, the defects in her army, and so forth, all of which things would be novel, and might, by dint of racy style and anecdotes, be made entertaining. Swinton, though an Englishman, approved the scheme. This rascal could have hunted in couples with that Duke of Lauderdale, who, being taunted with having sold his country, said he thanked God he had a country to sell, or with that Dutchman, who, being reviled for having sold gunpowder to the French who were besieging his

city, replied feelingly that he would have sold the city itself to the devil if suitable terms had been offered. Swinton provided the capital, and Latour the talent, and between them both they launched the *Courrier de l'Europe*, having previously taken care to address a prospectus to the Foreign Minister, Count de Vergennes, who answered that if the *Courrier* were loyally conducted he should favour its sale to the best of his power.

But Count de Vergennes never suspected that a paper designed for the purpose of spying on England, and turning its institutions into ridicule, would redound to the glorification of that country; and yet this is what happened. Latour was relatively an honest writer; that is, he stated facts as they were, without seeking to exaggerate them. He never lost sight of his purpose, which was to depict England faithfully to French eyes; but in pursuance of this object he showed up the good side of British customs along with the bad. Now, when everything had been said against England, that kingdom towered hundreds of cubits above France. There was no Bastille in London, no *lettres de cachet*, and no Farmers-General. The disputes in Parliament might be paltry, but it was a great point to have a Parliament at all; and then there was Trial by Jury, a comparatively free press—e.g. the *Junius Letters* still fresh in men's thoughts—and free municipalities. All these things seemed good and grand to the French, and thoughtful men began to brood about them. Count de Vergennes and his brother ministers were too far removed from the people to think in harmony with the public mind; and they saw only the anti-English form of the *Courrier de l'Europe's* articles, without calculating the hidden moral they bore. To them this foreign sheet really brought news. French politicians are fairly ignorant now, but they were hopelessly so then; and England, in its home-life—*en deshabille*, to use the native term—was as much an unknown land to them as that barbarously named Massachussets, where a certain George Washington was beginning to distinguish himself. There can be no doubt either that the *Courrier de l'Europe* did do England a great deal of harm, by emboldening the French Government to send help to the American rebels. The young Marquis de Lafayette, driven thereto by his mistress, Madame de Simiane, sailed across the Atlantic with a troop of Knight-errants. The *Courrier* continued to repeat that all was distraction and disorganisation in the English army, and eventually the French gathered pluck, declared war, and shipped to America those six thousand men which turned the scale of the war against us. It is a great pity that the state of our law did not admit of Lord North's Government seizing the man Swinton and wringing his neck a little; for assuredly men have swung at Tyburn and Newgate for villanies less than his. But Lord Mansfield, who was consulted about this French paper, declared that there was no weapon in our arsenal of Parliament Acts which could reach a man who published treason in a foreign tongue; and it was not till 1782 that the happy device was hit upon of confiscating the *Courrier* at the British Customs as "goods liable to duty." As the duty which the

Customs proposed to levy was on the same scale as if each copy of the paper were a folio volume, this obliged Swinton to get the *Courrier* printed in Boulogne. At the same time, having quarrelled with Latour, he chose a new editor, in the person of J. Pierre Brissot, the future Girondist. The change in the printing locality did not abate the anti-British speech of the *Courrier*; but had it done so, it would have been too late, for in 1783 the Independence of the United States had been definitely won.

And now, between the excitement of the American War on the one hand, the articles of the *Courrier*, those of Linguet, and the increasing confusion of home finances on the other, matters were speeding towards a crisis; and the Press of Paris reflected the universal thirst for reform at any cost. The newspapers could no longer be kept in bounds; fresh ones exploded every day; and if a journalist was marched off to the Bastille, twenty others seemed to spring up from under ground to take his place, and shout for his release. Necker, after trying to put money matters into shape, had been sacrificed by the nobility, as Turgot had been before him; and a succession of aristocratic and blundering financiers followed—Joly de Fleury, Calonne, Brienne—all three of whom undid what little good their predecessors had been able to effect. Then it was found necessary to call Necker back again. This was in 1788; and meanwhile the miserable scandal* of the Necklace had compromised Marie Antoinette in the eyes of the malicious Parisian populace, and turned the clamour for reform into a roaring, not only against the Court, but against the Royal Family. The days were past when the papers only spoke with reverence of the Queen; journalists of the popular party now seemed to vie with each other in launching the most vicious invectives. When it was at last decided in Cabinet Council that nothing could save the country but the Convocation of the States General, Louis XVI. asked despondingly of the Duke de Nivernais: "How about the Press—the audacity of newspapers is surpassing belief?" "*Laissons les brailler, Sire,*" answered the Duke. "*Nous pourrons les museler quand les bavards auront fini leur besogne.*" By the "chatterboxes" the Duke meant the deputies of the States General; but how their "besogne" ended, and what part the press played in their labours, form a new period of the French Press, the treatment of which must be reserved for another paper.

* Cardinal Louis de Rohan being enamoured of the Queen, was hoaxed by an adventuress (Mdlle. La Mothe), who bore some likeness to Marie Antoinette, and who enjoined the Cardinal into sending her a necklace worth 60,000*l.*, under the impression that he was giving it to the Queen. As the Cardinal was in embarrassed circumstances, he had bought the necklace on credit; but the jewellers, unable to get their money, complained to the King, and the whole trickery was exposed. Louis XVI., instead of hushing up the matter, unwisely had the adventuress tried by the Parliament of Paris, and publicly disgraced the Cardinal.

Missives in Masquerade.

"If," says some old satirist, "we passed through life with masks, what a vast number of tears and smiles we might save." But tears and smiles themselves have been found by experience to be an easy and convenient mask to counterfeit emotion and *totus mundus agit histrionem*. So language is a mask for thought, and cryptograms, if the word be licensed, are a mask for written language. That which is secret and mysterious has always had a magnetic force for the human mind. But mystery, like Proteus, in fear of continual detection, must continually change itself. Like women and *materia prima*, it ever seeks new forms. The number of dominoes in the property-room of cryptography is therefore legion. We content ourselves in this article with wiping off the dust from a few of these, in order to prepare them for public inspection. Most of them are old enough, it may be, to be new to the present age, worn and faded servants of the mirth and hostility, the loves and the secrets of bygone years. Some masks we have added of our own manufacture, but not many, knowing well that the web woven out of its own body by the spider is not more prized than the honey gathered by the wandering bee from every opening flower.

Cryptography, or the art of secret writing, has been in use from the institution of the Egyptian hieroglyphics to the latest system of shorthand. Its students have been priests, princes, and lovers. Hermes Trismegistus and the lowest juggler on the turf, or advertiser, whose works seem like the dreams of a sick man, in to-day's *Times*, Charlemagne and Charles the Martyr, Ovid and Don Juan, alike availed themselves of its assistance. It is called also steganography or polygraphy; sometimes cipher writing, from the use of the Arabic numerals; but this, as will be seen, is only one among many methods of cryptography. Such great authorities as Vieta the mathematician of the first Francis, Lord Bacon, and Bishop Wilkins, have considered it as a part of grammar, inasmuch as it is a mode of expression of thought; and, so far as that portion of cryptography is concerned which expresses words or ideas by single characters, it is probably the earliest mode of thought expression. The system of letters looks towards a later and less unrefined age. We know not whether the reader remembers the story of the Savage and the Figs. A barbarian had been entrusted with certain figs, to be taken to a friend of his master's, with a letter enclosed in the basket containing them. The barbarian, experiencing the pangs of hunger on the

- * way, opened the basket and partook of the figs, seeing they were many, and supposing that a few would not be missed by the donee. But he, on their arrival, reading the letter, which contained an invoice of the fruit, found that seven were deficient. On this he straightway charged the messenger with embezzlement, who was confounded, and confessed, looking on the letter in the light of an evil demon inimical to his interests. He to whom the figs had been remitted sent back sorbs, with a letter, in the same basket and by the same bearer, who thinking, with the Spaniard, that "there is no bread bad to hunger," devoured several of the sorbs; but before doing so carefully hid the letter under a large stone, thus frustrating, as he supposed, evil speculation. The story ends with the extreme astonishment of the savage when again detected, more especially after he had been allowed to examine the letter, and holding it to his ear for a long time, had not heard the faintest sound. It is added, though perhaps on insufficient authority, that, losing all respect for his own divinities, he subsequently became a convert to the Christian creed.

Probably the hieroglyphs of Egypt and China, as the Scandinavian Runes, preceded their alphabet, and were afterwards revived by the priests for the preservation of their secrets. Letters, like words, succeed one another as the leaves of trees, and it was not till the old leaves lay fallen on the ground that the priests consecrated them for their own advantage. So the Roman Church still retains a Latin liturgy, and would as little like a service generally understood as Cotytto the celebration of the mysteries of Bona Dea in the open sunlight, or a Vestal Virgin a dance in the Forum of Rome.

An argument has been urged against any revelations of steganography, on the ground that such may be applied to evil. But, alas! this objection may be urged against all revelation, and besides, steganography is a double-edged sword, teaching deceit and how to discover deceit. It would seem absurd to cut out the tongue because it is a world of iniquity, full of deadly poison and set on fire of hell, or to curse Cadmus, the inventor of letters, because they have too often seemed to be, what he is said to have sown, the teeth of serpents.

A different language from their own is, of course, a kind of secret writing to many, for the universal tongue which prevails in the signs of most of the arts and sciences, as in chemistry, music, astronomy, mathematics, has not yet led to an universal harmonious language, that large hope of the learned Bishop of Chester.

Extremes meet. The earliest kind of secret communication—we will say a few words first of that unwritten—as well as the latest, seems to be the wink. This voiceless voice of the eyelid, succeeded by other facial manœuvres and distortions, gave place to the language of the fingers, more or less modified, learnedly known as dactylology or cheirology, to the venerable Bede as indigitation, and to the people as the deaf and dumb alphabet. Of course the signs were not the same as those in our present scheme, but it was the same method of communicating the

thing signified. The Romans had an ingenious way of expressing all numbers up to 100 on their left hand, proceeding to the right for higher figures; and so Juvenal, speaking of Nestor, ironically complimenting him on his crow-like senility, says he must tell his age on his right hand. The commentators affirm that by this art any numbers could be expressed up to 900,000; but the device, owing to the extreme difficulty, and wonderful variety of its inflexions, has long grown obsolete. The peculiar significative use of the fingers applied only to numbers among the ancients, with a few exceptions, alluded to by Ovid, and never apparently reduced into any system, in which the fingers were used for amatory signals.

A species, however, of deaf and dumb alphabet was in use among the Romans, which consisted in declaring a letter by touching that part of the body of which the name in spelling was commenced by the letter required, as, for instance, if I touch my beard, "B" is signified; if my forehead, "F," and so on.

But the moderns have constructed an alphabet in which A is expressed by the little finger of the left hand held erect, B by the second, and so through both hands till L, which is expressed by the thumb of the right. Trying this alphabet in the privacy of our chamber, with the doors closed about us, we failed in the matter of the letter B—which refused pertinaciously to remain erect unless accompanied by C. The succeeding letters after L are indicated by the thumb and smallest finger of the left held up together, so M is shown by the thumb and two last fingers of the left, and so on; but of course this alphabet might be varied to almost any extent without any difficulty. An old Nurembergian who invented one of these alphabets, a needlessly complicated one, added in a scholium to his work this caution, that lest the company should be led to imagine that the fingers were with any set design contracted (for various contractions occur in his system) and extended, they should appear as if so formed in readiness to rub the head, beard, or face, or to scratch some other part of the body, or as if they were thus disposed from distraction of mind, or gesticulatory impatience, or other causes.

The scorner alluded to by the wise man, who talked with his fingers as well as winked with his eyes, and spoke with his feet, was one who had evidently entered deeply into the study of arthrology, and may be compared in excellence with the learned Dr. Gabriel Neal, who is said to have been able to understand any word without its utterance by the mere motion of the lips which formed it.

The giving of intelligence by nightly watchfires is confidently affirmed to have been at least as early as the taking of windy Troy. We know that Æschylus at all events makes them used with reference to Clytemnestra by Agamemnon.

There is a pretty method of private communion which Hero perhaps adopted or invented with Leander. It is described at length by Polybius.

The letters of the alphabet are arranged in the following or some similar manner :—

	1	2	3	4
1	a	f	m	r
2	b	g	n	s
3	c	h	o	t
4	d	i	p	u
5	e	l	q	z

and the intercommunicating parties are each provided with nine torches. To signify A one torch is held in the right hand one in the left, to signify S four torches are held in the right and two in the left, and so on.

Suppose a Roman lady wished to warn her lover, separated from her by night, barred doors, long distance, and a rain-swollen river, which, may be, runs between them, that he had better remain at home. She stands alone on her house top and waves four torches in her right hand and four in her left, then two in her right and four in her left, then four and one, a pause, and again one and one, one and four, one and five, four and two, and lastly four and three. The lover remains at home, and the dole which might have prevailed in that lady's domicile is prevented.

The scheme or table which we have here presented may of course be varied infinitely, or as near infinitely, if proximity may so be predicated of anything finite, as serves our purpose. And to save the somewhat cumbrous machinery of nine torches, fewer, say five, may be used in this way. One torch erect to signify A, depressed B, declined to the right C, to the left D, two torches erect E, and so on. To ensure rapidity of communication, however, we would be obliged to practice with these torches as at the schools for telegraphy without the like conveniences.

As communication is here held with the eye by means of torches it might as easily, of course after a similar manner, be held with the ear by means of the thunder of artillery or the jangling bells of a parish church. Indeed, once upon a time a gentleman is said to have told his love to a lady by tuning her pianoforte with proper pauses. We can only allude to other methods of expressing our written thought secretly, as for instance, by bouquets of various flowers, a method which has been developed into a Flower Language, by papers of diverse hues, by bracelets or other ornaments containing different jewels. A ring we once saw contained the word "remember," hidden in the following stones: Ruby, Emerald, Malachite, Emerald, Malachite, Beryl, Emerald, Ruby.

Coming now to written declarations in domino, it is obvious that they may be made in many ways. First our meaning may be masked by changing the letters of our alphabet into corresponding arbitrary marks

or ciphers, a device frequently practised in the Middle Ages, and which nearly cost the learned Trithemius his life. This able Benedictine—the father of modern polygraphy, as Sancho was the father of proverbs—formed a series of devout sentences through which mundane information might by and to the initiated be secretly conveyed, but unfortunately added to these certain cabalistic uncouth characters, which seemed so singular to the vulgar that they took them for talismans and prosecuted him for magic. He escaped by the skin of his teeth. His devout sentences, occupying many folios, still remain monuments of misapplied industry. This unhappy Trithemius had also the misfortune to be much abused by Jerome Cardan, who conceiving himself the inventor of a very superior kind of secret writing, which was perhaps as idle and cumbrous as any ever yet discovered, calls the luckless abbot “a bigger liar than Agrippa, more empty than Raymond Lully, who filled a mighty volume with dreams, an impudent sycophant if man ever was one.”

Secondly, the letters may not be changed, but their significations or simply their order. This transposition has given rise to those very best specimens of secret writing, which will be described afterwards. Or lastly, the letters remaining the same, and their order, the purport of the communication may be concealed by the nature of the fluid used to describe the characters or some extraordinary position of the communication itself.

It is impossible in a short treatise to do more than name some of the most remarkable of the ancient marks and signs which are comprised, partly under our first, and partly under our second category.

In India ❀ was the Vatsa, or sacred curl of hair on the breast of Vishnu. ך the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet, was the mark which the man clothed in linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side, was told, according to Ezekiel, to set upon the foreheads of those who lamented the abominations of Jerusalem. If this letter was, as Gesenius asserts it was, anciently written in the form of a cross, a curious coincidence would rise out of this passage with the subsequent doctrine of the orthodox Christian Church.

* was used by the ancient grammarians to denote a particularly fine passage. It is doubtless the origin of our asterisk.

÷ or the dotted spit denoted superfluity.

✱ which originally denoted “good,” was used later for its human personification.

⊖ called the “dark Theta” was the mark on ballots for death and the gravestones of Rome.

The letters S. V. B. E. E. Q. V., the well-known Roman salutation, and others like them, were called *sigla* or little signs, one letter standing for a whole word. Creeping into law they added even to legal chicanery, giving rise to every sort of evasion, and were in consequence, much to the chagrin of the lawyers, forbidden as antinomies by an edict of Justinian. It is said they were originally invented by one Tiro, a freed-

man of Cicero, and so called Tironian characters. The elder Seneca increased them to a large number, and they were added to by Cyprian for Christian use; but, owing to Justinian's edict, they became so little known and obsolete, that Trithemius, a learned abbot to whom reference has been already made, going one day to Strasburg in the execution of his office, found there in the library of the cathedral a psalter written in this old cipher, which bore for its superscription "A rare Treatise in the Armenian Tongue." *Se non è vero, è ben trovato.*

It is a merciful thing for the students of civil law that these *sigla* were abolished, for if Tribonianus found them perplexing, as he is reported to have done, in the green tree, what would our law students, diligent and persevering as they are, have done in the dry? The *sigla* were divided into letters and arbitrary signs, as the well-known C for Caius, O for Cain, K for condemnation, &c. The arbitrary signs were some 5,000 in number. For the particle *ex* alone there were, it is affirmed, 70 different marks, all of them more difficult than the original word. They were called "puncta," pricks, or points. Prudentius, in his treatise "Concerning Crowns," tells an interesting story of Cassian, a Christian martyr, who used to teach these pricks to boys at his school. "He presided over their studies, and, as a master of letters, sat surrounded by his mighty herd. He was skilled in the comprehension of all words by certain marks, and he could follow spoken words with his headlong shorthand." After he had fallen into trouble, the poet thus introduces his scholars laughing him to scorn. "Behold, we return to you those many thousand pricks which we once received from you standing and in tears. Be of good cheer! we write but what you bade us write; you urged on us that our right hand should never be unoccupied. Not again must we beg of you for holidays, O wretch of a master! so often denied. Here, over your hated flesh, we may rove at will, weaving comma with semicolon, and marking your carcase with every variety of curve!" Thus the unfortunate man died. It is not unlikely that the weird words of the Basilidians as well as the Abracadabra and other expressions, big, according to Cornelius Agrippa, with the secrets of the future, might be solved by some of those dead *sigla*, to whose grandchildren we probably owe those mystical forms of speech *Barbara Celarent Darii, &c.*, to which the memory of our university youth clings with a greater pertinacity than to the Articles of its holy Faith.

Other examples than those given of this species of our first class of cryptography are scarcely required. Any one may form arbitrary characters of his own. They present no more difficulty to the decipherer, however ugly and uncongenial their form, than our own letters without their usual signification. They remind us of the strategies of the Chinese, who were for frightening their enemies with the faces of demons. They are masks, and masks only, performing no promises worthy of such wide gaping: and yet this was the kind of cipher in which Pharamond and Charlemagne and the courts of Europe principally trusted till the end of the tenth

century. Such a fact shows, says a great authority, how little men addicted themselves to this subject as a science, while they felt an indispensable necessity for having recourse to it as an art.

A curious and early method of cipher which we place here, though not strictly coming under any of our three categories, was the cipher of knots and stains. Each communicating party was provided with a long strip of wood on which the letters of the alphabet were arranged at unequal distances; a string was stretched over this, and marked with successive numerals where the letters came required in the message. The string was removed and sent to the confederate, who applied it to his own strip, and read off the communication.

By the method which is usually known as "Mirabeau's" the alphabet is divided into five rows, marked from 1 to 5, and each letter of these rows

is again similarly marked. Thus the first row is marked ¹ a b c d e, and so
1 2 3 4 5

to the end. It is almost needless to say that though in our examples we have usually arranged the letters alphabetically, there is no necessity for doing so; such an arrangement, on the contrary, is far better avoided, as being less difficult for the decipherer than an arbitrary one which should be previously agreed on between the recipient and the remitter. The numbers from 6 to 0 are used as non-significant, a device which adds to the labour of solution. In the secret writing the number of the row containing the letter required is written in the place of the numerator, the number which denotes its order in that row is written in the denominator, and non-significants added at discretion. From the shape this cryptography assumes, it is frequently called the Bridge or Fractional method. By this method

$\frac{94}{74} \frac{73}{74} \frac{39}{3} \frac{2}{26} \frac{2}{4} \frac{3}{3} \frac{42}{33}$

would signify the patronymic "Tomkins." It is of course immaterial whether these numbers be written with or without a break, so long as there is a proper correspondence between the upper and lower significant numerals.

The various kinds of ancient Irish or Ogham cipher made up of strokes deriving their power from their various positions relative to one horizontal line, were probably the origin of an invention generally ascribed to the ingenious Marquis of Worcester, which consisted in writing lines in the directions of the long hand of a clock, supposed to revolve continually backwards. This alphabet commences at C, which is represented by a short perpendicular line; D by a line inclined at an angle of 45° to C; E by a line at right angles with C; F by a line at 135°; G by a line in an opposite direction to C, and so on, all these lines being of the same length. At L the line representing C recurs, and is to be made a little longer, and the same order to be observed till T, when the same line, again recurring, is again to be increased in length. In writing by this alphabet, all letters needless and otiose as far as pronunciation is concerned, are to be omitted, as in writing shorthand. It would be better, indeed, to

observe this rule in all secret writing, as it renders the deciphering more difficult, and is besides good husbandry of time, and paper, and toil.

Two persons have the same edition of a book—a dictionary is the most simple and easy—and correspond, by writing for the words they wish to send, the numbers of the page, line, and word in the book where such words occur. This plan is intolerably tedious, and is deficient in ingenuity, but of course undiscoverable without the aid of the key.

A clever method was once proposed of writing by means of musical notes, by which, said the able contriver, a music-master may instruct his female pupil not only how to play the harpsichord, but also how to play the fool, and teach her a lesson she may repent learning as long as she lives. His whole alphabet was composed of crochets and minims; signatures of flats, sharps, and appoggiaturas, &c., were interspersed here and there by way of grace to the composition, signifying nothing. Subtleties were also added in the bass clef, but in such a way as to make us fear, with the author, that a musician might think the whole a “very odd, as well as indifferent composition.”

An objection might be raised to the drawing-master on similar grounds, and we think all mistresses of seminaries and establishments, as well as those ladies calling themselves (perhaps somewhat prematurely) finishing governesses, should thank us for the hint. Tender passages may be conveyed by points and *poulets* written by variations in a line. Nay, is there not the already well-recognised symbol of a skewered and dripping heart, reminding us very nearly of the neighbouring butcher's shop! but, *longo intervallo* of that Temple of Minerva in Egypt, on which was written, or drawn, an infant, an old man, a hawk, a fish, and a sea-horse, which being interpreted is, “O, ye that are born to die, know that God hateth impudence.”

Who does not remember those ironical gifts presented by the Scythians to the Persians under Darius, consisting of a bird, mouse, frog, and arrow! Is it necessary to add the explanation, that unless their enemies could fly as birds, or hide underground as mice, or swim through the water as frogs, it were vain for them to hope to escape destruction.

The three essential properties, says my Lord Bacon, of a cipher are: 1. Facility in execution. 2. Extreme difficulty in solution. 3. Clearness from suspicion. Unfortunately these first two rules are apt to clash. It is generally the case that the easier the execution or writing of the cipher the easier also is its discovery. It is not like that easy writing which, according to Rogers, is, we will say, “very” hard reading. This, we think, will be shown by the specimens of secret writing which fall under our second category, into which the צירוף of the Hebrews shall be our august introducer.

צירוף was the name given by the Cabbalists to the conflation of a new word by a conversion of the letters of an old one. This was done by means of various changes in the alphabet, of which the two chief will be mentioned hereafter.

The book *יצירה*, that is, concerning the creation, chiefly treats of this kind of secret writing. From this book the Jews derived an acroamatic or esoteric doctrine, by them denominated jewel-lustre, very distant from that which is usually called Scriptural, called by them candlelight. And from this portion of the Kabbala (which literally means "traditionally received"), which is comprehended in *יצירה*, our term cabbalistical arose, to signify that which is mysterious or uncanny. The speculative, or *עיוני*, part of the Kabbala, was divided into *נכספריא*, from *νεωμυρπια*, *נוטריון*, from *notarius*, and *המורה*, change. By the first a word being resolved into the figures for which its letters stood, and these added up, was held equivalent to another word of equal numerical value, though of different letters. So the Rabbin say, "till Shiloh come" was written for "till the Messiah come;" the Hebrew words for Shiloh and Messiah both having the same numerical value, *i.e.* 358; and thus, according to them, "The whole earth was of one language," means "of the holy language," *i.e.* the Hebrew. The second method made one letter stand for a word, as the Roman *sigla* already in this article described. The third simply denoted change or transposition of letters.

Under this third subdivision are included the famous *אלכס* and *אתכש*. By *אתכש*, for the first letter of the alphabet was written the last, for the second the last but one, and so on. After this device the Cabbalists say Jeremiah wrote Sheshach for Babylon, since the prudent prophet feared openly to excite the anger of those then besieging his city.

So in Jer. li. 1, "in the midst of them that rise up against me" is interpreted "Chaldeans;" the letters of the Hebrew words exactly corresponding according to *אתכש*. This interpretation is remarkable as having the support of both the Targum and the Septuagint.

By the second, *אלכס*, the alphabet being divided into two parts, the first letter of the first part was written for the first letter of the second, or *vice versâ*. By this method the mysterious "Jabeal" is explained to mean Remaliah, the letters of these words corresponding according to *אלכס*. The explanation is at least worth as much as the natural silence of the commentators or the sententious remark of Calmet, "We have no knowledge of this man."

We may add here, though introducing a method of cryptography of our first order, that we are indebted to the most ancient Rabbinical lore for the following familiar diagram, now filled with our own characters, arranged in that unfamiliar order which is sanctioned by the Kabbala:—

u l c	t k b	s g a
x o f	w n e	v m d
r i	x q h	y p g

It is scarcely necessary to explain that, according to this method of

writing כסרס עלל ערלל ערלל ערלל, would signify "Minx! said Bessy Squeers." The figure, of course, may be in many ways varied.

A device of Cæsar's, according to Suetonius, was to change the position of the letters of the alphabet by four places, both inclusive; thus he wrote D for A, E for B, and so on. Such was Cæsar's method of rendering his writing obscure. But so easy an imposture may well be named by others than Scaliger "a pure absurdity."

The scytale was a black wooden roller of about three or four cubits in length, by means of which, the Lacedæmonians conveyed private intelligence. A narrow strip of white parchment or leather—from the Greek word from which the name of scytale is derived—was wrapped slantwise round the roller, and the message then written on it lengthwise; afterwards, this was removed, and of course presented words and sentences distorted, mutilated, and unintelligible; but the person who received it, wrapping the document round another roller, in all respects similar to the one on which it was originally written, solved the mystery of disorder and obtained the sense. This deceit, likewise, is derided by Scaliger, who says there was no necessity for another roller, and that none but a fool would now trust his secret to such a device.

In a season when infants suck in subtlety with their mothers' or their nurses' milk, and show the first fruits of fraud in their cradle, such specimens of cryptography as we have described, though sufficient to hoodwink a more simple age, will be thought idle and ridiculous. Known as they must be to all the blear-eyed and barbers in the town, they would not have been alluded to in this article had not its nature seemed in some sort to ask this at our hands. But there are other knots which, to quote good Bishop Wilkins, in his *Mercury*, "it were madness for a man to think he could unravel." And his censure of Scaliger, who pretended he could decipher any secret writing—words which rather show that critic's courage than his capacity—seems just, when he says it was too inconsiderate and magisterial a sentence of him to conclude all this kind of learning to be therefore vain.

One of the knots of Wilkins may have bred the somewhat rare method of cryptography known as that with the numerical key. Say the key is 2 3 1 (any number would of course answer, if known by the confederates), the message is written thus:—

2812 3123

Fake away;

then observing what figure stands over the first letter of the writing, count that number of letters forward from F, and write down result H; continue this, and the message will assume this appearance:—

Hdldxcdb,

which of course should be written without any space. This method, after all, is but a refinement, though a very considerable one, on the method

of Cæsar, which was afterwards, by the way, imitated by Augustus. For to decipher this, one should first know the language of the original message—an important point; then whether or no it is a cipher with a numerical key; then, of how many figures this key consists; then, what is their order; and, lastly, whether the calculation should be made backwards or forwards. With regard to all which circumstances, as Forcellini says in the preface to his *Lexicon* of the whole Latinity, “*Expertus disces quam gravis iste labor.*”

Of that writing which is simply obscured by the transposition of its component letters, the following is an ingenious example:—

t t n e t t a e
h w e r l i
r i a d l s
h i o a h f n c.

To decipher this, first take the first letter of first line, then first letter of last line, then last letter of first line, then last letter of last line, then first letter of second line, and so on with second and third lines, as with the first and last. The riddle being resolved, will give that favourite and familiar, yet remarkable and refulgent sentence of *Henry's First Latin Book*, “The Christian will not fear death.”

This sentence may also be expressed in language worthy of an *Ædipus* by putting the significant letters in the beginning, middle, and end of groups of other letters chosen at discretion. The more repulsive the result can be made to look the better; thus—

Txhie Cyohlmr Ist Isoalgn
Wjoigzl Lnoptnpxgro Tfe Asrtd Exzafgt h.

In neither of these examples is there that frequent recurrence of certain groups of letters which is generally fatal to the success of a steganogram.

A species of this writing is exhibited in the common acrostic, where the significant letters are always placed at the beginning of the line. An example in which the significant letter was placed at the beginning of each word of a passage far removed from the real purport of a lady's letter, which was to caution her lover against her brother, is given by an Italian author: “*Carmina autem Vergilii erunt a Francisco recitata ante tuum regem Eusebium.*”

When Judas fought against Antiochus, his watchword was that sentence from *Exodus*, “Who is like unto Thee among the Gods, O Lord?” In the Hebrew the first letters of these words make up the name by which after the victory he was known—“*Maccabæus.*”

The Rabbin delight in these mysteries. From the sentence “Many rise up against me,” taking the letters composing the Hebrew word for “many,” they find in them the initials of the Romans, Babylonians, Ionians (Greeks) and Medes. It is a pity they do not fall into better chronological order. In the word for “create,” they find the doctrine

of the Trinity—an argument having more weight with them than any Christian logic. It is obvious that an ingenious fancy might find anything at will by this lax system of exegetics. It accordingly fell under the rebuke of Irenæus, who says that from such idle follies many heresies began, especially those of the Valentinians and Gnostics.

The device of the plate like that for stencilling, with small loopholes, is called by the French *le chassis* or *la grille*, and by the Germans *netz* or *gitter*. It is placed on paper, and the important words or parts of words written in the windows; the plate is then taken away, and the covered parts filled in with otiose letters to make up a sense.

In the following sentence the letters written in italics are those written through the windows of the plate, with a fac-simile of which your correspondent is of course furnished, and constitute the essence of the communication — “*Return to your afflicted parent Harry.*”

Bacon's cipher which, with the modesty which always characterized that wisest and greatest of mankind, he calls “a cypher of our own which has the highest perfection of a cypher, that of signifying *omnia par omnia* anything by everything,” consisted in resolving all the letters of the alphabet into two only. These two, *a* and *b*, by means of repetition and transposition in five places, may be made to assume thirty-two differences. He then, by their aid, resolves the word “Fly” into *aabab—ababa—babba*. He next takes some phrase of little moment (which he calls an external writing) such as “stay, for I am alive,” having the same number of letters with the internal writing “Fly” when resolved, and writes those letters which correspond with the *a*'s in one kind of character, and those which correspond with the *b*'s in another. This little difference in the handwriting would probably remain undetected by any but an accomplice. Were the communication printed, say for instance in Italic and Roman letters, it would at once lead to suspicion, and thus sin against the third rule enunciated by its learned author.

The great inconvenience in this plan is that it requires five times as much labour as ordinary writing. It does not, therefore, accord with Bacon's first rule. Like Cuvier's crab, it seems good in other respects, but another plan of a similar and perhaps better nature will be shown further on.

An example is given by Trithemius which the number of superfluous or non-significant letters alone would suffice to make objectionable, were it not so on the score of its easy detection.

Baldach abasar lemai elamech abrach misach abrai disarai athanas, signifies *Abel bibit*. The second letter of each word is alone significant. The magical incantation-like appearance of the words, which are mostly taken from the Hebrew, is due to the learned abbot himself, who invented some six score of them.

The following riddle, which attempts to conceal a passage taken from Tacitus de M. G. VII., has the same defects as, or rather greater than, the last :—

Lampsi deso salcu eregesu sexa anobio nous father clitates uducest
text sirtutey ai ma tsumunta, onect gregio abuso, &c.

Here in the first line the first three words and the last are non-significant; in each following line the first and last words are non-significant; and in each of the remaining words the first and last letter are non-significant. Clearing then of non-significants, we have "Reges ex nobilitate duces ex virtute sumunt, nec regibus," &c.

There is an old device which we will now bring out of its congenial shadow into the sunlight.

Here is a repulsive-looking writing written after its directions :—

naa	uhh	hsn
epd	rtl	grr
ihl	ars	son

The key is shown by the following combinations :—CBA—BCA—ACB. The letters are written in rows, according to the positions of these capitals. The first letter is therefore "h," the second "u," the third "n," the fourth "g," the fifth "e," &c. In the last word the letter "e" has been left out.

Another equally ugly :—

Trray. yal. sbare. ra. stanerth. btv. feia. obco. ed.

Here the stops are put in simply to mislead the decipherer, should there be any so daring. The message was originally written in a square of six letters in breadth, and afterwards written as it now stands, diagonally, "T" being the first letter at the extreme left-hand corner of the square.

The figure may be changed to any other. For instance, to an oblong of, we will say, seven letters long and five broad, each vertical row being marked by a cipher in its natural order. This order is then changed after a manner agreed on, and the message written by taking the letters in the vertical lines in that order. Thus,

Oilonewiyosrsulouweannlueaydwrrroohe,

signifies, "A rose on your window sill when you're alone."

The following diagram may make the matter more simple :—

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	a	r	o	s	e	o	n
2	y	o	u	r	w	i	n
3	d	o	w	s	i	l	l
4	w	h	e	n	y	o	u
5	r	e	a	l	o	n	e

The order agreed on was 6, 5, 4, 3, 7, 1, 2. Instead of the horizontal the perpendicular numbers might obviously have been chosen.

Old books which treat on this subject are full of arbitrary uncouth signs which, though they present a terrible appearance, add not a jot, as we have already said, to the real difficulty of the solution. Enough may be done, and has been done, with our common letters to render all hope of solution vain. As in the following case, where the letters in the table are arranged alphabetically, but may of course be ordered after the caprice of the writer:—

	AA	BB	CC	AB	AC	BC	CB
A	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
B	h	i	k	l	m	n	o
C	p	q	r	s	t	v	x

In this table, as before, the letters usually wanted alone are written down.

The subject to be treated is that pregnant truth: "Balbus is not a Christian." B is expressed by ABB, "a" by AAA, "l" by BAB, and so on, in each case taking the lateral large letter first. The result, which may be broken where you will, will have this appearance.

ABBAA—ABABA—BBCB—CC—ABBBBCAB, &c., which, perhaps, might be safely trusted with the most inquisitive, nay, even a second Scaliger.

Suppose a table made after the following fashion:—

AB	{	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	l	m
		n	o	p	q	r	s	t	v	x	y	z
CD	{	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	l	m
		z	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	v	x	y
EF	{	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	l	m
		y	z	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	v	x

and so on in a corresponding series for the whole alphabet, the upper line of small letters remaining in the same position while those below are varied by one place, as in the table. Now, if we want to write steganographically "Watch this frame," we take a short sentence, say "Time flies," which is called the key, and arrange our letters thus:—

watchthisframe
timefliestimef'

If we look for T in our table, which we will suppose completed, above w (or v) we shall find e; this, then, will be the first letter of our converted sentence. Looking for I with a above it, we shall find v,—v therefore, is the second letter—looking for M the letter above t in its line will be

a—looking for E the letter under c in its line will be n, and so on. The whole sentence will be

evansdqtextxp,

which presents the appearance of a word in Mexican added on to a familiar English sirname, or surname, whichever the reader pleases.

Coming now to our third and last category, where the secrecy lies in the method of sending rather than in the thing sent, no bad plan was that adopted by Hasdrubal, or some other Carthaginian general, who engraved his communication on the wood of his tablets before they had been coated with wax, and then sent them with their usual coating, as new tablets, for a present to his accomplice.

This piece of ingenuity is ascribed by Herodotus to Demaratus; but in his case there was no accomplice, and the mystery would have remained unsolved had not Gorgo, the daughter of Cleomenes, to whom the tablets were sent, urged by a woman's curiosity, insatiable for that which is concealed, laid open the matter.

But perhaps one of the most extraordinary deceptions ever known in cryptography was adopted by Histieus in his message to Aristagoras, advising him to revolt. This Histieus, then, chose one of his most faithful slaves, and having shaved his head, tattooed it with his advices, and after keeping him till his hair had grown again, despatched him to Aristagoras with this message only, "Shave my head and look thereon." Two objections might be urged against this method: first, if the communication was of an urgent nature (which indeed it was) the growing of the hair involved some little delay; and secondly, it is difficult to see why, if his slave was most faithful, Histieus did not entrust his message to the slave's mind instead of his skull, especially as the slave must have known, from the pain of the operation, that some mystery lay there, and, in his time of trial by threats and promises, would probably have said so. The account we have given is that offered by Herodotus, who has been irreverently called "the father of lies." The story is better told by Aulus Gellius, who says Histieus chose for his purpose a slave who had an infirmity in his eyes, and shaved his hair under pretence of healing his diseased vision, and after, when his hair was grown, sent him to Aristagoras, bidding the slave tell that ruler to repeat the operation. By this version the slave's suspicion was less likely to be aroused, but the difficulty of the delay still remains. Aulus Gellius denominates the whole undertaking as "an unexpected and profound wile excogitated by barbaric craft."

Most people have tried their hand at that so-called secret writing which is effected by various vegetable juices, and brought to light by fire or water—here the use of sal ammoniac and juice of onions, of solution of galls, and of copperas is well known. From the time of Ovid, who advises a young lady in his *Art of Love*—as if, forsooth, young ladies required instruction, at least on that subject—to deceive all prying eyes by a letter written with raw milk. Till the present day receipts have been prescribed

of various values to this end. One of the most curious is that which recommends an ink to be used made under certain conditions with the ichor of glow-worms. The writing, says the author, may be well read in light of moon or star. This is a sure recipe.

It was by the use of such strange terms as nemilua, cala, raphoca, lapolce, and others, which Trithemius used when treating on this branch of his subject, that he introduced his book to the flames, and yet the said uncouth terms were but distortions of the Latin expressions for alum, milk, camphor, and onions.

The story of Histieus may be compared with that of Harpagus, who sent a letter to Cyrus in a hare; or with that of a certain surgeon, who, wishing to disclose a matter of great importance to a brother of his craft, sent him a live bulldog to be dissected, to whom he had previously administered a bolus containing the letter he wished kept secret. So his friend was guided by that dumb dead dissected beast, as the wise-men were guided by a star. Another applied a MS. to a sore leg instead of, or under, the bandage. The sewing of the letter in a shoe is recommended by Ovid, and rolling thin leaves of metal containing the secret into earrings by another ancient author; a third directs the communication to be written on a blown bladder, the bladder to be afterwards placed in a flask and filled with wine. Letters may be also written on the inside of the sheath of a sword, on an arrow, on a bullet, in an egg, or rolled up in a hollow stick; which last proceeding calls to mind the story of that unfaithful depository, who hid the trust-money in this manner, and when called before the judge for breach of trust by the depositor, asking the plaintiff to hold his stick while he kissed the Bible with fervent devotion, swore he had returned the money, and it was at that very time in the plaintiff's possession. Another method, explained at large by a learned Dutchman, which consisted in first writing the letter in lilliputian character and enclosing it in a hazel nut, cannot, for other reasons than want of space, be more than alluded to here. Among a hundred other devices suggested by affection or by fear, letters were hidden in women's hair, which would now, we suppose, be represented by their chignons. But we cannot refrain from adding one more method which has been proposed for secret transmission of sound. Let a man, says the ingenious author, breathe his words slowly in a long hollow cane hermetically sealed at the farthest end, then let him suddenly and closely seal the end into which he breathed. The voice will continue in the tube till it has some vent. When the seal is removed at the end which was first sealed, the words will come out distinctly and in order, but if the seal at the other end be removed their inverted series will create confusion. This happy conception, which seems to have been proposed in all good faith by its author, reminds us of that famous one of bottled sentences, and may be compared with Joseph's grunt, to which he gave vent in the execution of his trade, and which is preserved, it is said, in crystal among other equally valuable and sacred relics in a celebrated church in Madrid.

But our reader has long ago, it may be, yearned to reach the shore. Our sails are to be furled. It is as impossible to enumerate all the many methods of secret writing as to gather olive berries from a fig tree. We have, we hope, selected the strangest and best. It only remains now to give a few general rules which have already been hinted at concerning secret messages, to say a word or two about deciphering and then *valets et plaudite*, or, speaking more modestly, with the proudest people under the sun, *pedir humilde perdon de las faltas nuestras*.

First, then, a secret message ought, like a telegram, to be composed in as few words as possible, nay, in as few letters, like shorthand, since this will save trouble to the writer and to the reader, and will moreover render less likely the danger of detection. For the more of a secret writing that a decipherer obtains the greater is his chance of deciphering it. But in a very short message, where letters do not recur, it is of little moment what method of secret writing we use, since the first and most important rule of deciphering, "observe repetitions," is here of none avail. Without this, their polar star, such men even as Wallis and Vieta would wander through the sea of doubt in vain. Secondly, all spaces or breaks between words should be carefully avoided, or if used, used to mislead; and if it is desired to render a writing particularly difficult at the cost of greater trouble, let the secret writing be expressed in another, like a wheel within a wheel, or the skins of an onion. Any one interpreting such doubly-masked letters might well be accused, like poor Trithemius, of profiting by the assistance of the devil, or his dull representative at the present day, a spiritual medium. Thirdly, non-significants should be used often, and our alphabets always arbitrarily arranged. Lastly, the difficulty of a secret writing may also be much increased by writing in the Oriental fashion from right to left, or better still from right to left and left to right alternately, ploughing letters after the fashion of the Japanese, or as the Greeks in that order called *βουστροφηδόν*.

It is possible that Daniel—we speak with reverence—first introduced the art of deciphering when he explained to the King of Babylon that sad and mystic writing on the wall. That scripture may have been explained by the Cabbalistic method of *אֵתְרִשׁ* to which we have before alluded, and which in all probability Jeremiah learnt from Daniel as his contemporary and friend. Indeed the art of deciphering must have been very feeble formerly, or the Lacedæmonian scytale could scarcely have remained a difficulty; and yet it may have been as good for their age, as it is bad for ours. Gorgo's advice was more a piece of feminine cunning than artistic skill.

A good decipherer must be a man of many parts. Such a Mercury is not made out of every wood. He must be of lively imagination, good judgment, and retentive memory: he should be well acquainted with many languages; for though the strange assertion is true that a man skilled in deciphering, and not knowing German or Spanish, may yet explain a mystic writing in those tongues; though this is true, it is never-

theless of great assistance to the explorer to be well versed in them. The necessity of patient perseverance it is needless to insist on. Bruce and the spider should be continually before his mind's eye. Practice alone here, as elsewhere, leads to perfection.

The decipherer should first aid himself as much as possible by collateral evidence as to the remitter and receiver, and the date and subject of the missive. He should then consider it under the light of certain linguistic criteria, in which he should be well skilled, in order to determine the language in which it is written. He should observe, if possible, monosyllables, bigrams, trigrams, &c., always beginning his investigation with the shortest words. He should set down on a table the order of recurrences of each sign or letter. Those most frequent are probably vowels; where there are only two letters, one is necessarily a vowel. He should know the comparative frequency of recurrence of all letters in all languages in which the missive may be written. For instance, that "e" is the most frequently repeated letter in French, English, and German—"o" in Italian and Spanish. That in the latter "o" is frequently followed by "s," and "u" by "e." That the English tongue abounds in monosyllables. That the only monogram in German is "o," and monosyllables very rare. The presence of such combinations as "sch," "ich" should, of course, be looked for here. In our own language "i" and "a" are the sole monograms. Many other lights of this kind, the attentive decipherer will soon kindle for himself. We have already said that for deciphering patience and sagacity are both desirable; but patience is yet more desirable than sagacity.

Writers on this subject are at issue as to whether there can be an undecipherable cipher. On the whole it seems there are some ciphers which may safely defy all human ingenuity, though a great many apparently difficult present no stumbling-block to the experienced artist. It is from the undue estimation in which these riddles have been held, that the idea has arisen of there being none which may not be discovered. The practice above referred to of using two copies of the same edition of a book must be, considering the vast number of books published, as nearly inscrutable as anything not divine. And of a like nature must be that in which single characters stand for whole words, and those in which the cryptogram is itself the result of a cryptogram, and many others. Where single characters stand for whole words, obviously many misapplications will arise, as his who rendered S P Q R *Sono poltroni questi Romani*, or that of the slave who, hearing his master explain them with reference to certain half-emptied wine flagons, at dinner time, after this fashion, "*Servabis puer quod restat*," became afterwards confused in mind, in which state these letters recalled to him his master's admonition thus metamorphosed, "*Serve! potabis quod restat*," which command he unhesitatingly obeyed. The three explanations given by Æsop to Xanthus of the Greek letters found on the broken column, Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ, may be here added. Æsop's first interpretation was, "Dig at four places, and you will find a golden treasure;"

then, when the treasure was found, "Immediately divide equally the treasure found;" but as Xanthus did not take the hint, came Æsop's last interpretation, "Immediately restore the golden treasure to King Dionysus."

Those who maintain all ciphers to be decipherable usually choose examples of the easiest; examples, moreover, which they have themselves framed, and of which therefore they knew the key beforehand.

A German writer gives us the following, without the solution:—

64MF4KM184KC404KN948E4PM2404KQ25298EDK6N4KKM3B1
8ABFFPMBM2K6M918PQ25DK6N4KKMAB4MPC21854N4M4K2MPM
B2MP4MFD484DK69EO42R54N4M4K.

The real difficulty here is that presented by its non-division. It indeed possesses none other. We find by computation that 4 is the most frequently recurring cipher, and after this there is most frequently K. These characters stand probably therefore for EN. The characters 18 stand four times in succession; they are probably CH. DK6 is found thrice. As we have supposed K the equivalent of N, this word is probably *und*. Setting these supposed values over those groups which contain the most of them in the secret writing, we have ^{enn} N4KKM. N therefore will represent (the probabilities increase as we continue) W, for 6 is our representative for D.

We have twice the group of characters ^{ewe en} 54N4M4K. 5 and M are therefore obviously equivalent to G and S.

^{enschen} In the word F4KM184K F is equally plainly M. We need scarcely continue the investigation. The meaning is, "*Des Menschen Leben währet siebenzig Jahr, und wenn's hoch kommt, so sind's achtzig, und wenn's köstlich gewesen ist, so ist es Mühe und Arbeit gewesen.*"

Mrs. Gaskell and her Novels.

BETWEEN Aphra Behn and Mrs. Gaskell there is a great gulf fixed: indeed the two names are only mentioned in juxtaposition for the purpose of illustrating the very remarkable point that in the inception and culmination of the modern novel, woman has borne even a more prominent part than man. Objectionable as are the pictures of life which the first-mentioned author has left us, it is significant that her writing stands out sharp and clear from the mass of contemporary compositions. That peculiar truthfulness, or *vraisemblance*, which the female intellect seems to be most successful in producing, belonged to her. And though her novels and those of her immediate successor and imitator are largely of that class in which "the male characters are in the highest degree licentious, and the females as impassioned as the Saracen princesses in the Spanish romances of chivalry," there is still sufficient individuality about them to earn for Mrs. Behn the position of the first writer of modern fiction of any note. From her age to the present the tide of imaginative writing has rapidly progressed, gathering strength with all the movements of practical science, which have not been without influence or moulding power upon it. It would form a curious, if almost impossible, speculation whether on the whole the rapid growth of the novel has been to the service or to the detriment of humanity. Undoubtedly, that liberty of unlicensed printing, for which Milton earnestly wrought, has been of essential benefit when looked at in its broadest effects; but when we come to consider the rills of impurity which have flowed from the mighty stream, we see that the blessing has been far from unalloyed. How much there has been, nay, is there now, in this nineteenth century, which might well be spared! Fortunately, Lethe is a good deep river, and we can drink in its waters forgetfulness and oblivion to all that is unworthy in literature, if we cannot entirely blot it out of existence for the benefit of succeeding generations.

It may be assumed as a position from which none will desire to force us, that the novel will always retain its place, and that one of considerable importance, as long as literature itself lasts. The newspaper may eventually prove a formidable competitor with it amongst certain classes of the community, if changes which have apparently been impending in its construction recently are matured, but it can never entirely supersede the charm of fiction. The novel, having for its basis allegorical representation, which has from the earliest ages been the greatest teacher in the universe, will have assured to it an influence beyond the possibility

of decay. Subject to modification in accordance with the taste and demands of successive epochs, we may expect it to be ; it might even merge again into some form of the drama, from which it originally sprang ; but, as a fact, it will remain, and one to be considered in any estimate and acknowledgment of the intellectual and moral forces of the time. At the present day the novel stands higher in purity than it ever did ; as regards quality, too, the most illustrious names which are to be found in its annals are those which have shed splendour over the past fifty years. Ease of reproduction, of course, has let in aspirants whose work is of inferior mark ; but with the greater good in this matter, as in all others, we must be content to endure the lesser evil. And here arises the value of the critic—viz. in the development of the faculty of eclecticism, which he is called upon to exercise, by virtue of his office, for the benefit of mankind. With the spread of a healthier and sounder criticism we may expect a substantial improvement in the manifestation of the art of fiction.

The career of Mrs. Gaskell, whose works, in the course of their issue, probably delighted as numerous a body of readers as have fallen to the lot of any modern author (with one or two well-known exceptions), was diversified by little incident of a striking character. Indeed, were it not for a few facts which we are privileged to make known, her biography in all its essential features could be written in a few sentences. Her life was one of those which furnish the best evidence that woman is frequently fitted to accomplish greater work than that which is usually assigned to her sex ; whilst at the same time Mrs. Gaskell lacked none of those virtues which make home "the earthly paradise." We have had several illustrious examples of women who never allowed their literary work to trench upon their domestic duties, conspicuous amongst these being the late Mrs. Somerville, and to the number must be added Mrs. Gaskell. No matter how eager she was to complete ventures which she had in hand, and which, as literary offspring always are, were exceedingly dear to her, it is interesting to know that she was much prouder of ruling her household well, which she did in the most admirable manner, than of all that she did in those writings which have made her name so justly popular. It is said that she had a peculiar tact in training her servants—a matter which baffles too many of our directors of households, and in which the practical advice of such a woman would have been of the most eminent service. But even a cursory perusal of her works will show that Mrs. Gaskell must have deeply studied most of the questions affecting her sex, that of female labour being perhaps the most paramount. Her sympathies were quick and ready ; and from the peculiar position in which she was placed and the persons amongst whom she moved, she had every opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with the toiling, suffering operatives of the North of England. Scene after scene in her novels demonstrate that it was no superficial knowledge she gained, or was content to make use of, in her study of operative and other life. The

keenest anguish such a nature as hers could feel would arise from the fact that she could do so little in the way of actual amelioration of the condition of the factory girls she saw dying around her. Except by the aid of personal observation, no adequate idea could be formed of the disastrous nature of the daily life of what are called "mill hands" in the North of England, at the commencement of the present century, and through many of its earlier years. It is, of course, quite possible to believe that men are far from having done all that lies in their power yet to make the condition of the operatives what it should be; but it cannot be doubted that, owing to the earnest efforts of Mrs. Gaskell and others imbued with the same spirit, a very great and praiseworthy reform has been accomplished. In addition, also, to this physical improvement, which after all is only one branch of a great question, there has been a greater *rapprochement* between employers and employed than was formerly the case. To this end the mental labours of the author of *Mary Barton* must have largely conduced in an indirect manner. She was able to write somewhat authoritatively from the conviction that she had conscientiously studied both sides of the question. The sorrows of the poor workpeople she knew; the too often arrogant bearing of the masters she had ample opportunities for studying; and the knowledge acquired in both ways she was most successful in turning to account. If, occasionally, her sympathies seem to lean to one side, we can on the other hand never charge her with unfairness in omitting to state the arguments on the other. While alive with sympathy, her books are at the same time models of candour and judgment.

Mrs. Gaskell was born in 1822, and died in 1865, having in her short life accomplished a great amount of work, most of which is calculated to stand successfully the test of time. Her father was Mr. William Stevenson, who is spoken of in the *Annual Biography and Obituary* for 1880 as "a man remarkable for the stores of knowledge which he possessed, and for the modesty and simplicity by which his rare attainments were concealed." These excellent qualities descended, in a very marked degree, to his daughter. But it was not alone on the father's side that intellect was exhibited, for Mrs. Gaskell's mother was a Miss Holland, of Sandlebridge, Cheshire—an aunt of the late Sir Henry Holland. Amongst other characteristics of the novelist was this, that she was remarkably sensitive to blame, caring comparatively little for praise. She generally went abroad when a new work of hers was about to appear, in order that she might be out of the way of the criticisms which should be passed upon it. Her first appearance as an author was in William Howitt's *Visits to Remarkable Places*. It appears that on seeing an announcement of the original production of that work, she wrote an account of Clopton Hall, which immediately attracted considerable attention, and was spoken of as a graphic paper, exhibiting great powers of description; the reception this article met with gave an impetus to her desire for literary work, and from that time forward her pen was never idle. The beautiful lines written by

Walter Savage Landor, "To the Author of *Mary Barton*," will not be forgotten. They appear in his *Last Fruit off an Old Tree*, and are a genuine tribute from one worker in literature to another. Mrs. Gaskell was married to a kindred and sympathetic spirit, a Unitarian minister, of literary attainments, still resident in the great centre of business activity in which she spent so many years of her life.

In attempting to form a judgment upon the works of Mrs. Gaskell, it will be only just to her powers to take up those novels which mark off certain epochs in her literary career—no author having yet written whose work did not exhibit at various stages the influence of personal experience. As years pass by, those things which seemed of moment to a writer when in the flush of youth fall into comparative insignificance, whilst those for which a carelessness, or even mild contempt, was cherished come to the front, and are seen to be invested with an importance which at one time would have been inconceivable. Take the work of any man of first-rate genius. That of the early stage will be remarkable for redundancy of colour, that is, the flower of talent; look at the later, and whilst it shall not have lost the old fire and passion, it will be powerfully quiet. Genius will have matured, and its culminating beauty will be perceived in rich ripe fruit. It is interesting to watch such growth and such fruition, and we are not of those who are discontented with the first stage when we have reached the second. With infinite tenderness we can sometimes turn back to the early wealth of genius which we have admired, and can find more satisfaction in the comparison and enjoyment of the two styles than we should ever have enjoyed had there been the same level field of excellence always offered to us. The charge of crudity we can condone when the gifts of the writer are undoubted. We know that when he has time to mature, he will emerge from the defective condition in which he lies; his wings will become stronger gradually, and we shall not be disappointed in the expectations which we have cherished. Sad, indeed, should we be to lose the first works of those brilliant authors whose genius has illumined again and again the dark periods of our national literature.

The several stages of our author's career may be said to be marked by three of her works, though the lines of demarcation in her case are not so apparent as in most writers; for she appears in her first widely-known work to have attained a power of expression very rarely witnessed in the maturest efforts of those of her order. Still, were we expected to define clearly the various stages of progress which she has attained—or rather to note the influence of time in ripening her gifts—we should direct attention to the first, the middle, and the final stage of her genius—into each of which divisions we should be able, we imagine, to classify her work. The novel which first fixed public attention, and which belongs to the first stage, was *Mary Barton*; that which marks the second is *Sylvia's Lovers*; and that illustrative of the third is *Wives and Daughters*. Each of these works presents considerable points of difference, while they

are all at the same time stamped by the genuine impress of genius. Several others could be cited, which for particular qualities may even be superior to those named; but they do not so decisively show Mrs. Gaskell at her best, or her pen animated by the varied charms which these books individually and indisputably discover. The charge has been made that Mrs. Gaskell was but a member of "that school of novelists which her friend Charlotte Brontë inaugurated;" but after a careful study, and possessing a somewhat intimate acquaintance with all that the two have accomplished, we are bound to say that the charge appears to us to have no foundation. In fact, there is a considerable difference in method, as there was a considerable difference in gifts, between the two. The only grounds for the comparison which has been made are these—that the two have successfully dealt with certain phases of Northern English life, and that both, perhaps, have been most successful in their delineation of female character. These are the ostensible grounds assigned. But note the differences. Charlotte Brontë, while possessing, undoubtedly we think, the greater genius, exhibited a much narrower range than Mrs. Gaskell. Such characters as have established the fame of the former are but few in number, though they stand out from the canvas with a Rembrandt-like effect, compelling one to own that we are conversing with real flesh and blood—heroes and heroines drawn because of the circulation of their own blood, and not for the "circulation" of the libraries alone. This is the quality which made the slight, pale country girl famous almost against her will. Again: her men are as powerful as her women—at least in most cases this is so; so that it is not just to assert that she is principally distinguished for her portraiture of her own sex. But that quality which chiefly marks her off from Mrs. Gaskell is her intensity, and any one reading her various enthralling books will acknowledge that this is unmistakable. Mrs. Gaskell, too, is realistic and intense to a great degree; but this quality, which seems reserved for almost the very highest kinds of genius in its fullest manifestation, is veiled in her by a general excellence which the other did not possess. The modes of life pursued by the two may have had some influence on the development of their talent. The author of *Jane Eyre*, far away on those melancholy Yorkshire moors, asked for nothing but solitude, save that dozen or score of characters with whom she acquired close fellowship, and whom she has rendered immortal. She individualized even the very stones and the trees about her. Mrs. Gaskell, on the other hand, possessed a much wider vision. Having, indubitably, by nature, a great faculty of reading human character, her canvas was necessarily more crowded than that of her friend, and frequently she was unable to arrest herself and complete her individual sketches with the same minuteness. In individualization, she was confessedly Charlotte Brontë's inferior, as she also was George Eliot's, and for that reason a higher position must be accorded to those writers; but in grouping she was inferior to neither, and there are sketches of life in her books which for fulness and variety of detail are almost unrivalled.

Turning to the works themselves, let us take up for a little while *Mary Barton*, the volume by which our author first became distinguished. It is a picture of Manchester life, as its title-page states, and never, in the whole range of novels founded so closely upon fact as this, has the story been made more realizable to the reader. One would think that it was well nigh impossible for the grinders of the poor to read the opening chapters of this story, and still go on heaping up their gains, while they cared little whether those who were instrumental in their accumulation perished by the roadside. The workman's side of the labour question was never more forcibly depicted than in the following passages, which during the last fifty years have now and again been the inarticulate cry of thousands who lacked the power of uttering definite and appropriate language: "At all times it is a bewildering thing to the poor weaver to see his employer removing from house to house, each one grander than the last, till he ends in building one more magnificent than all, or withdrawing his money from the concern, or sell his mill, to buy an estate in the country, while all the time the weaver, who thinks he and his fellows are the real makers of this wealth, are struggling on for bread for his children, through the vicissitudes of lowered wages, short hours, fewer hands employed, &c. And when he knows trade is bad, and could understand (at least partially) that there are not buyers enough in the market to purchase the goods already made, and consequently that there is no demand for more; when he would bear and endure much without complaining, could he also see that his employers were bearing their share; he is, I say, bewildered, and (to use his own word), aggravated, to see that all goes on just as usual with the mill-owners. Large houses are still occupied, while spinners' and weavers' cottages stand empty, because the families which once filled them are obliged to live in rooms or cellars. Carriages still roll along the streets, concerts are still crowded by subscribers, the shops for expensive luxuries still find daily customers, while the workman loiters away his unemployed time in watching these things, and thinking of the pale, uncomplaining wife at home, and the wailing children asking in vain for enough of food—of the sinking health, of the dying life of those near and dear to him. The contrast is too great." Of course, while there is much truth in this presentment of the case of the workman, Mrs. Gaskell is too conscientious to hide the fact that the other side might be somewhat less harshly stated. But the arguments she employed were those felt by John Barton; and can we wonder at his querulousness when we follow the story, and learn that his mother died from absolute want of the necessities of life, and that his only son, the apple of his eye, who could only be kept alive by the very best nourishment, also became a corpse through starvation? It is the position of Barton, and such as he, towards the upper classes, their employers, which Mrs. Gaskell set herself to place before the world in this story to which we are referring. Every page teems with evidence of the close knowledge the author had acquired of

her topic; and the tragic history related is almost sufficient to blind us to the merit of the book, when regarded as a purely literary effort. From page to page of the narrative we are hurried on, now getting glimpses of a poverty-stricken hovel, and now being introduced to the mansions of the millionaires; again being treated to a glowing description of a mill on fire. The story is too sad a one to write, except by a noble, large-hearted woman—one in whom the fire of benevolence has been kindled by the Divine. Such a being it is who has penned it, and thereby testified for ever her love for suffering, toiling humanity. And after all that she must have seen of the degradation and loathsomeness attaching to many of those whose life-stories she must have probed, it is cheering to hear her say as she does of those who are frequently termed the "dregs" of society:—"There was faith such as the rich can never imagine on earth; there was love strong as death; and self-denial among rude, coarse men, akin to that of Sir Philip Sidney's most glorious deed. The vices of the poor sometimes astound us here; but when the secrets of all hearts shall be made known, their virtues will astound us in far greater degree." We should not be loth to dwell long amid the lights (of which, however, there are few) and the shadows of this book, which was fraught with an interest rarely paralleled in fiction. The poor have here their interpreter. She stands and pours forth the tale of their sufferings into the ear of the rich. That ear, which had hitherto been almost closed to the story, must perforce open now when one appeals to it who has power to deliver the message with which she is charged. It may be painful to read the record, but it should be done. We must follow John Barton in all his wanderings. How graphically are his experiences in London told, and what a genuine piece of art that is where the author describes him as calling at a cottage with his baby, asking for food, as it is nearly "clemmed," and being afraid that his request will be refused! But the woman was tender, and as she hung down her head and unlocked a drawer in the dresser Barton had evidence why she could not fail to be kind to the child. "I were sorry to be prying," he says, "but I could na' help seeing in that drawer some little child's clothes all strewed wi' lavender, and lying by 'em a little whip an' a broken rattle. I began to have an insight into that woman's heart then." The character of Mary Barton is well drawn. She is never insipid, sometimes wayward and impulsive, but always loveable, even when she is half drawn away by Mr. Carson, while another is loving her deeply and tenderly. The manufacturer, too, is typical, in his semi-gentility and coldness. Passion, except as regards the feeling he appears to cherish for Mary Barton, is foreign to his nature. Things went from bad to worse with Barton, till he became a Chartist, a Communist, "and all that is commonly called wild and visionary." Then arose combination on both sides—masters and men—and each began to take measures of their own, instead of trying to approximate their views to those of their opponents, thereby having some chance of an amicable arrangement of their differences. The book

deals with exactly similar circumstances to those which we have again and again seen reported recently in connection with various trade strikes. The result, however, in this case was one the like of which we trust to see no repetition, even as we would labour to banish the differences between masters and men altogether from our shores. For what is it but a reflection on human nature when commercial matters are allowed to breed strife, and finally—though very rarely we are glad to think—bloodshed? Surely the intelligence of which we boast should be sufficient to adjust relations, whenever they become strained, between various classes of men.

In the instance which Mrs. Gaskell has recorded, no understanding could be arrived at, and the consequence was, the commission of a crime which, together with its surroundings and concomitant incidents, gives to the narrative its thrilling character. The men bound themselves by a terrible oath; a number of pieces of paper, one of which was marked, was put into a hat and shuffled together. The gas was extinguished, and each drew out a paper. The one which John Barton drew committed him to the lot of the assassin! Those who have read the story will never forget the impression produced by the chapters devoted to this tragedy; and those who have not read it should do so at once. We get here some insight also into the sufferings of the rich, when we behold old Mr. Carson standing over the murdered remains of his only son. We gather, too, what the strength of revenge is when the manufacturer, reminding the officer of justice that he is very rich, says, "Well, sir, half, nay, if necessary, the whole of my fortune, I will give to have the murderer brought to the gallows." He will know no rest while the assassin lives. Truly, the story seems surcharged with misery, and the mind is agonized during its perusal to its utmost tension. There is little in English novels surpassing in force the trial scene of Mary Barton's lover for the murder of which he was innocent. The author here has risen to the true dramatic height in her delineation. We are made to feel almost as though we were actual spectators of the trial, and witnesses of the anguish of Mary as she comes forward to give evidence; and of whom it is said, "that her look, and indeed her whole face, was more like the well-known engraving from Guido's picture of 'Beatrice Cenci' than anything else" which could be given for a comparison. One who saw it says, "that her countenance haunted him, like the remembrance of some wild sad melody heard in childhood; that it would perpetually recur with its mute imploring agony." The whole picture seems to us superior in its realism to that wherein another gifted female novelist has narrated the trial of Hetty Sorrel for the murder of her child. What a grand character does this poor country girl become after her baptism of fire! Compare the rapid sentimentalities which are flung about the lives of heroines in the generality of novels with the career of this long-trying Mary Barton, and note how they miserably fail as representations of human nature, with all its heritage of passion and suffering. But, besides the character of Mary, there are several psychological studies of the deepest interest in

the volume; notably, that of Mr. Carson, senior, whom we have seen thirsting for the blood of his son's murderer. Mrs. Gaskell has here wielded a masterly pencil, and we follow the mill-owner's career in most artistic gradations till we see him, not only ultimately saved from his intense anger, but recovered to be of great service to the classes whom he had before oppressed. It is a little singular that there is scarcely any joyousness in the book till we come to the last chapter; and as the story opens with children at its very commencement, so it introduces us to them at its very close. In the one case, however, they are in the gloom of adversity, whilst in the other we obtain the last glimpse of Mary as an emigrant living in the American forests with her husband and son. The sublimation of her spirit had been a long task—at one time it appeared as though it could never be attained; but it is the Almighty who says that light shall succeed to darkness, and it is He alone who has the power to accomplish the change.

Such is the novel by which Mrs. Gaskell first largely gained the public ear; and whilst from the barest outline of the plot we have no difficulty in apprehending why it should have secured general popularity, so, on a study of the book itself, we shall not be astonished that it has almost passed into a classic. In regarding it as an example of Mrs. Gaskell's first stage, we should say that it exhibits, first, force; secondly, truthfulness; and thirdly, concentrativeness. Yet let it not be understood that these qualities are absent from any other work of the author; the fact being simply that, though they may not be so apparent individually in the later novels, it is because they are attended by other graces of composition. The examples we have already cited from *Mary Barton* will demonstrate the first quality, that of force or power; as regards the second, in her construction of the work the author has not suffered herself to be bound by the canons then in vogue as to the writing of novels. She has dared to throw off the trammels, and challenged the reading world with a story which in the hands of a tyro would have been blurred in many of its incidents, tampered with in some of its characters, and probably made altogether to result in a complete fiasco. Perfection is found neither with the rich or the poor to the exclusion of the other; but wrong is never suffered to appear under false colours. About its true designation, aspect, and final arraignment we are allowed to make no mistake. The way of the world in conniving so that "offence's gilded hand may shove by justice" meets with no approval from her; nor, on the other hand, are the poor allowed to suppose that their poverty or wrongs are to absolve them from the exhibition of those virtues which should be common to humanity. Yet, rigid moralist as she is, the woman's heart of sympathy for aught that is unfortunate or miserable throbs through all the words she has penned. And probably this is another reason why the book cannot be easily laid aside by any who are interested in the psychological dissection of their species. The quality of concentrativeness we have mentioned, though apparently trenching on that of force, is really a

different quality altogether when speaking of Mrs. Gaskell as a writer. The force refers more to the qualities of the author herself in the expression of her thoughts; the concentrativeness refers to the absolute imprisonment of emotion in a few pages. In very few writers is there less diffusiveness in this respect than in the author of *Mary Barton*. We read page after page, come upon scene after scene, which excites the emotional nature to a very high degree. What appears to be a laborious effort with many in regard to the enlistment of feeling is a work of comparative ease with her.

But to pass from a consideration of these points for the time being, let us devote a few words to another matter. It was said by some critics in effect—"Yes, undoubtedly a new writer has arisen who is worth listening to. We admit her talent, but—" (and there is always supposed to be great virtue in a *but*) "there is something lacking. She has no *humour*." At one time, of course, there seemed to be some ground for the charge. But even the shallow critic should have remembered that Mrs. Gaskell might have had good grounds for not relieving the sombre gloom of her tale of Manchester life by too many flashes of humour. It was strictly a serious aspect of human nature which she had to present; and that under special circumstances, and with special intentions on the part of the writer. It had not been designed that she should write a novel simply with the view of giving phases of life alone, though in that respect her representations were true to the letter; a second purpose ran through the story, at which we have already hinted, and to be true to her object of endeavouring to aid in procuring an agreement between two great classes of society hitherto antagonistic, was what she chiefly desired. Opportunity, however, was afforded by subsequent labours to any critic who was desirous of being further convinced as to her possession of the faculty of humour. Let any one take up *Cranford*, and see whether he does not find as rich and charming a vein of humour running through it as he will in the writings of any novelist. It is delicious. The style is calm and yet flowing; ease and humour—a humour worthy of the best of our female writers—are the distinguishing characteristics of the book. From the very first page, where we find the village of Cranford in the possession of the Amazons, to the last, all is delightful.

The novel teems with excellent touches of character. There is Mr. Hoggin, the village doctor, whose name, as might be expected, was voted coarse by the ladies of Cranford; but he defied their scrupulosity, and after all, as Miss Jenkyns said, "if he changed it to Piggins it would not be much better." They had "hoped to discover a relationship between him and that Marchioness of Exeter whose name was Molly Hoggins; but the man, careless of his own interests, utterly ignored and denied any such relationship." Then, too, there is Mrs. Forrester, who was one of those Cranfordians continually put to all kinds of shifts to conceal their poverty. When she gave "a party in her baby-house of a dwelling, and the little maiden disturbed the ladies on the sofa by a request that she might get

the tea-tray out from underneath, every one took this novel proceeding as the most natural thing in the world; and talked on about household forms and ceremonies, as if we all believed that our hostess had a regular servants' hall, second table, with housekeeper and steward, instead of the one little charity-school maiden, whose short ruddy arms could never have been strong enough to jarry the tray upstairs, if she had not been assisted in private by her mistress, who now sate in state, pretending not to know what cakes were sent up, though she knew, and we knew, and she knew that we knew, and we knew that she knew that we knew, she had been busy all the morning making tea-bread and sponge-cakes." And so on—the whole novel being relieved by such touches of geniality. Every one will remember the disastrous failure of Captain Brown to introduce Mr. Dickens's works into Cranford. Having purchased *The Pickwick Papers*, which were then publishing in parts, the Captain read aloud to a party of ladies the account of the "swarry" which Sam Weller gave at Bath. Miss Jenkyns, who had a mania for Dr. Johnson, capped this by reading pompously a portion of *Rasselas*. She considered it vulgar and degrading to literature to publish a work in parts (blissfully ignorant of the method in which *The Rambler* was given to the world), and turning to the Captain said—"Dr. Johnson's style is a model for young beginners. My father recommended it to me when I began to write letters,—I have formed my own style upon it; I recommend it to your favourite." On behalf of Dickens, Captain Brown depreciated old Sam Johnson; but, being goaded still further by Miss Jenkyns, he transgressed propriety, and vented an oath on the great lexicographer. Yet *Cranford* is not altogether given up to this lighter element. There are passages of pathos in it which will fully sustain comparison with most others of the author; whilst some of the dear old antediluvian Cranfordians themselves are brimming over with the milk of human kindness. Whenever a good deed requires to be done they hasten to do it, and the spirit of a heroic self-sacrifice exists amongst them in a very eminent degree. The sketch is a true picture; and if the ladies are eretichety, we pardon them everything for the real nobleness of their hearts.

Amongst the somewhat voluminous works of the author there is one which deserves singling out, for merits which it possesses in a more striking degree than the rest. The memory of the pleasure we received on first reading it is upon us while we write, and cannot be obliterated. It remains as a pleasant dream, or as a sweet-smelling odour. *Cousin Phillis*, the story in question, is an idyll in prose. There is as much poetry in its descriptions of persons and scenery as in any book of its length that we remember. The farm life of England was never drawn in sweeter, clearer colours. We can almost scent the hay-fields, and see the sun shedding its golden light upon their broad bosom, and upon the gardens and hedges. As we read, the melody of the birds passes almost from a description into a reality, whilst the spirit which breathes through

everything takes the willing senses captive, and fills them with an answering delight.

For a representation which is almost perfect of pastoral beauty we can refer the reader to a scene in the harvest-field, where Mr. Holman gives out a hymn at the close of the day, and his daughter and the labourers join in the tune. The spectator of it, describing the circumstance, says—"There we five stood, bareheaded, excepting Phillis, in the tawny stubble-field, from which all the shocks of corn had not yet been carried—a dark wood on one side, where the wood-pigeons were cooing; blue distance seen through the ash-trees on the other. Somehow, I think that if I had known the words, and could have sung, my throat would have been choked up by the feeling of the unaccustomed scene." Very regretfully we tear ourselves away from such attractive and soothing incidents as these; but we must reluctantly say good-bye to *Cousin Phillis*, and turn to material of a sterner character. What a revulsion of feeling we endure when we come to the book called *A Dark Night's Work*, a piece of as sterling realism as has ever been attempted, and told with striking power. Unmeasured misery and woe are made to turn upon the commission of one dreadful deed; but beyond the thrilling character of the narrative, which holds one as if in chains until it is finished, there is little in the novel to recommend it. The style is inferior, and lacks the grace of most of Mrs. Gaskell's writing. The book is, in fact, neither better nor worse than many which Miss Braddon is in the habit of issuing, except for that one single thread of sincerity which runs through it. The author, even with an unpleasant subject, is always the conscientious, painstaking artist, and never writes for the simple purpose of sensation. It is unnecessary to refer at length to the various short stories which Mrs. Gaskell has written, in order to obtain an estimate of her genius. They are all imbued with the same spirit; but there is one fact noticeable about them, and that is, how nearly all are given up to the presentation of painful episodes in human life. There is scarcely one which we remember which is not deeply tinged with sadness and suffering. It is the peculiarity of this writer, indeed, that such subjects attract her far more than joyous ones. Even her long stories have as much of misery in them as happiness, if not more. The sad aspects of humanity are drawn again and again, till occasionally our cry is for light in the midst of great and oppressive darkness. Hers must have been a brooding nature; one which often reviewed the moral mysteries of the universe; and which, on stepping forth into the world, was of a most impressionable character, mirroring upon itself the sorrows of those with whom she came into contact.

Ruth, a story which has generally been one of the chief favourites with readers, is remarkable for the manner in which it deals with a question that requires the utmost delicacy of treatment. We have seen the subject repeatedly treated in the most objectionable and unsatisfactory manner, notably by a popular writer just recently. In enlisting the

sympathy of the public with the unfortunate heroine of his story, he purposely threw a false halo round her character. The one who had sinned was not only made to triumph over others who had not fallen, but she was held up to admiration, whilst others whose characters were spotless were made subject only to contempt. Let it be remembered, also, that she who had sinned had not so far repented of her sin as to confess it amply and strive after a high morality, for we find her practising the vice of hypocrisy, and taking a position to which she was not entitled by assuming a false character. Such is the method in which morals are sometimes dealt with; and we mention this instance particularly with a view of correcting what is too common an error. Vice is continually represented by certain novelists in the most glowing colours; or, rather, if the vice itself is not always absolutely so treated, the utmost attractiveness is accorded to the vicious. Their errors are mentioned in a half-apologetic way, and the writers hurry on to enlist the sympathy of the reader for their Anonymas and their Lotharios, who are generally described as the handsomest of God's creatures, whilst those in whom virtue is predominant are supposed to be weak, silly, or ugly. It is astonishing that such a treatment of things should be persisted in; but we put it to our readers themselves to vouch for the truth of this remark. In too many cases, it is to be feared, it is the insidious spice of wrong which gives a filip to the circulation of the books to which we have referred. If it were possible to get these writers of fiction to study works of a high moral character with a view to profiting thereby, we might recommend them a course of the greatest masters in their art. As our lady writers are mostly the prominent offenders in this respect, we have all the more confidence in commending to their attention this novel of *Ruth* by one of their own sex, as an example of what true and yet fearless handling can accomplish with a delicate subject. Ruth Hilton is drawn so beautifully and tenderly, that we are left no option but to admire her greatly, and unfeignedly sympathize with her; but the artist who has given us the portrait has not scrupled to put in the shadows boldly when required. Pure in her inmost soul as she is, Ruth is not allowed to conquer that social ostracism which is the ban of all who sin. Mrs. Gaskell has drawn a *good* character who has sinned, and even the wretched being herself feels that humility and obscurity are the only lot in future for her. There is none of the brazen flaunting before the world which inferior artists frequently assign to similar characters, and which demonstrates that there is a deeper depth even than the one great sin which they have committed. Wherever she went Ruth Hilton was deeply beloved in spite of herself, but in all the stages of her existence the shadow was upon her. She had been stricken, and drooped like the flower withered by the blast. The story of the poor dressmaker is well known. It opens in a city in the Eastern counties. Ruth is working those long hours day by day which are even yet in some of our fashionable quarters in London a disgrace to all concerned. There is little light in

her life; a word of kindness from some who are like slaves with herself, and a short walk into the beautiful country on a Sunday, and that is about all. By-and-by the great circumstance of life comes—she loves; and like all women under the influence of love, she cannot reason, she can only idolize. The end of it all is known; the poor girl becomes an outcast, but the betrayer, as usual, goes on his way safely—rich, and not lacking the esteem of the world. He is not altogether dead to feeling, however, till his mother steps in and teaches him how to become a fiend. Then come the wanderings of Ruth, and her reception into that little home in North Wales, where we make the acquaintance of as noble a hero as breathes in literature in the person of Thurstan Benson. The book deserves to live if for this character alone. But there are others in whom the light of the Divinity burns brightly. Good Faith Benson, Thurstan's sister, is for the moment sorely tried, because her brother, who is a minister, jeopardises his character by taking into his house an outcast, whose touch would be considered contamination by the world. Yet his pure and childlike nature conquers her; and search where men will, it would be difficult to find acts which breathe the truest spirit of benevolence more than do these of the unsophisticated Welsh couple. The story progresses, till suddenly in the midst of its burden of sorrow we come upon a piece of writing which might have been penned by Dickens, and seems in its way as admirable a touch of comedy as need be. It is where Sally, the brawny, buxom servant at Mr. Benson's, tells the story of her sweethearts. She shall rehearse part of it here. It concerns one Dixon, a Methodist, who called upon her unexpectedly one day while she was cleaning her kitchen. She squatted down to her work, thinking, with regard to the amorous Dixon, "I shall be on my knees all ready if he puts up a prayer, for I knew he was a Methodee by bringing up, and had only lately turned to master's way of thinking; and them Methodees are terrible hands at unexpected prayers when one least looks for 'em." Dixon's prayer was of another kind, however. Sally *loquitur* :—

At last he says, says he, "Sally, will you oblige me with your hand?" So I thought it were, maybe, Methodee fashion to pray hand-in-hand; and I'll not deny but I wished I'd washed it better after blackleading the kitchen fire. I thought I'd better tell him it were not so clean as I could wish, so says I, "Master Dixon, you shall have it and welcome, if I may just go and wash 'em first." "But," says he, "my dear Sally, dirty or clean, it's all the same to me, seeing I'm only speaking in a figuring way. What I'm asking on my bended knees is, that you'd please to be so kind as to be my wedded wife; week after next will suit me if it's agreeable to you." My word, I were up on my feet in an instant!—"Master Dixon, I'm obleeged to you for the compliment, and thank ye all the same, but I think I'd prefer a single life." . . . Says he, "Think again, my dear Sally. I have a four-roomed house and furniture conformable, and eighty pound a year. You may never have such a chance again." . . . "As for that, neither you nor I can tell, Master Dixon. You're not the first chap as I've had down on his knees afore me, axing me to marry him, and maybe you'll not be the last. Anyhow, I've no wish to change my condition just now." "I'll wait till Christmas," says he. "I've a pig as will be ready for killing then, so

"I must get married before that." Well, now, would you believe it? the pig were a temptation. I'd a receipt for curing hams, as Miss Faith would never let me try, saying the old way were good enough. However, I resisted. Says I, very stern, because I felt I'd been wavering, "Master Dixon, once for all, pig or no pig, I'll not marry you. And if you'll take my advice, you'll get up off your knees. The flags is but damp as yet, and it would be an awkward thing to have rheumatiz just before winter."

The notion of matrimony being a temptation because it would afford scope for trying a new plan of curing hams, is very charming, but it is evidently a touch of nature. The character of this servant altogether is a very admirable piece of work from the novelist's point of view. The least shade of her identity is never once lost during the whole of the story. Some of the other characters are not sufficiently individualized to make the entire book remarkable as a study of human nature; but the emotional element of the novel is very strong. Before we part with it, let us beg the reader to notice that scene where Ruth has an interview with her son, and for the first time breaks to him the news of her humiliation and her sorrow. The most obdurate must be penetrated by its simple but terrible pathos. It is almost unique for its pathetic force. Who cannot realize the grief of that woman's heart as her relation culminates with the passionate exclamation, "Would to God I had died!" And then, turning from herself, to give her last thoughts to her son, she says—"Remember that, when the time of trial comes—and it seems a hard and cruel thing that you should be called reproachful names by men, and all for what was no fault of yours—remember God's pity and God's justice; and though my sin shall have made you an outcast in the world—oh, my child, my child!—remember, darling of my heart, it is only your own sin that can make you an outcast from God." Soon afterwards the end approaches, for the devoted being contracts a mortal malady, in nursing the man who has brought her misery; the gloom is dispelled, and she passes away with sweet song. Thus out of tribulation the noblest ends are wrought.

The question of the unequal distribution of pain and pleasure—a question which has agitated every thinking mind at some period of its history since Time began—is dealt with in *Sylvia's Lovers*. But to all questioning and deep searching we are left at the close to say with Tennyson, "Behind the veil, behind the veil!" The confession is once more forced, that none ever meet exactly with their due share of either joy or sorrow. The lots are changed, and the deserving are very frequently apportioned the "severer discipline." Mrs. Gaskell, however, be her beliefs right or wrong, has this advantage, that she is unwavering in her inculcation of the highest principles. Yet again she almost overweights her work with the tragic element. Look at the life of Sylvia Robson, and see what is set against the one great charm of personal beauty which she possesses. Her heart is incessantly probed to its very depths by trouble, and when at last she is represented as almost purified from the

dross of mortality, it is only by the loss of all which she had at one period imagined to be necessary for her happiness. Hope springs out of the death of the lower pleasures, the pleasures which delight, but do not really touch the depth of the soul's need. A remarkable contrast is witnessed in this respect between Mrs. Gaskell's treatment of the deepest moral and spiritual questions and that of many other writers. One would think, to read scores of works of fiction which issue from the press, that to eat, drink, and be well clothed and housed were the chief and almost only ends of existence. We generally find, at least, that material riches and a coarse kind of happiness are heaped upon the heroes and heroines who are presented to us. And thus, for the most part, in being robbed of their truth to mortal destiny, these lives present no points of sympathy wherein we can be at one. The only result of the novels themselves is to please the fancy, and give a spice of enjoyment to what is by no means the higher part of our nature. In *Sylvia's Lovers* Mrs. Gaskell has been true to humanity as it has been brought before her. She is perfectly just. Sylvia is no imaginary portrait. How vividly her life realizes the anguish which rends the heart behind many an exterior which seems to be fair! Her character is beautiful, but it is not perfect—we had almost said it was so beautiful because it was *not* perfect. The idea is that it is not impossible; the touches of human weakness at once make Sylvia a part and parcel of that common race to which we all belong. She is not exalted by a fancied perfection up to a sphere into which so many heroines are translated, but which none of the living women ever attain. Philip, too, her husband, has had his imperfections; and when, after far journeyings, he returns home at last, it is to die. The two, in their moment of understanding each other, are separated by the icy hand of Death. To the question, "What hope of answer or redress?" there is only, we once more remark, the answer of the Poet Laureate.

We mentioned this story as illustrative of the second stage of Mrs. Gaskell's literary career; and for this reason, that it indicates a superior finish to many of her previous novels. It is evident that the author's powers were maturing. There is a greater grasp not only of character but of actual expression, though, as we have said, all her writings are singular for their strength. Life on the North-eastern coast is delineated with perfect skill, the separate studies of Monkshaven fishermen and others being marked with great *verve* and completeness. The story of the press-gang, that institution flourishing in good King George's time, by which his Majesty's subjects were liable to be seized and carried away to the wars by main force, is graphically told, and the horrors which attend it, if history and recollection are to be relied upon, are drawn without the slightest exaggeration. For touches of pathos, the account of the sailor's funeral, and the proceedings subsequent to the arrest of Sylvia's father, Daniel Robson, for the attack on the King's representatives, leave nothing to be desired, whilst the whole scene between the dying Philip and Sylvia is strikingly emotional. Then there is the disappointment of

Hester, who loves Philip Hepburn with an intensity rarely witnessed in women, whilst he, on the contrary, is devoted heart and soul to Sylvia, whose affections have long been centred on the handsome Kinraid, a character which is likewise finished in the author's best style.

Another novel which attained considerable popularity at the time of its issue in a serial form was *North and South*. It seems to be more unequal in merit than most of Mrs. Gaskell's stories, the latter part especially bearing some traces of hasty composition. The author partly explains this herself by stating that she was obliged to conform to the conditions imposed by the requirements of a weekly publication, and likewise to confine the story within certain advertised limits. There can be little doubt that under some circumstances this would greatly interfere with a writer, who should be perfectly unchecked, and left to suspend or resume work at pleasure, halting here and pushing ahead there. But if any one wishes to test Mrs. Gaskell's power of drawing life, let him turn to this novel and study the characters of Margaret Hale and her father, the poor country clergyman. Touches of infinite sympathy reveal how clearly and how completely the author had apprehended her *dramatis personæ*. Margaret is one of the most charming personages in fiction, and when she was carried off by Mr. Thornton, the mill-owner and manufacturer, we were not quite satisfied. A feeling of disappointment affected us; we did not think him good enough—and yet he is anything but a contemptible character, only we wanted goods marked "extra-superfine" in this case. The story is less sad than the previous ones, though there are several occasions on which the heart-strings are touched. Poor Bessy Higgins and her dying conversations with Margaret form a melancholy narrative. The mills at Milton had been too much for her. She had worked in a carding-room and contracted consumption there by taking in upon her lungs the "uff," or fine white bits, as they flew off the cotton in process of carding. As Bessy said, and we will note the "humanity" prevalent at that period in the North, "There's many a one as works in a carding-room that falls into a waste (consumption), coughing and spitting blood, because they're just poisoned by the fluff. Some folk have a great wheel at one end o' their carding-rooms to make a draught, and carry off the dust; but that wheel costs a deal o' money—five or six hundred pounds, maybe, and brings in no profit—so it's but a few o' the masters as will put 'em up." And so the poor factory hands went on dying. Some of these iniquities have been altered since. Margaret Hale gave her life to Mr. Thornton, and from the conversations she had frequently with him before that event, one can see that she was to have a mighty influence upon her husband for good in the matter of the treatment of his workpeople. She is cast in a truly heroic mould; sweetness, without too much sentimentality; strength, without losing any of her femininity, being her prominent characteristics. It is such women as she who make the race great; their influence, while apparently of the gentlest, is yet of the most permanent kind. They make plastic the

wills of those who are brought into contact with them, just as the sun's beams operate undemonstratively upon nature. Yet she could exhibit a rapidity of action when necessary—as on the occasion when Mr. Thornton was in danger from his exasperated workpeople, and the brave girl flung her arms round him to shield him from their wrath, at the risk of her own life. Thornton himself, though doubtless well drawn, does not arouse any special admiration on our part, and the same may be said of his weak-minded mother. The mill-owner was too cold and self-sustained to be worthy of the love of such a woman as Margaret, though probably she was able to see beneath the exterior, and recognize the rugged worth that was dormant there, and afterwards developed. The love scene with which the book closes is natural and admirable, rather a rarity in novels, for there are few of such scenes which do not strike one on reading them as strained and unnatural. The thought crossed the two together that their choice would be disapproved by both their parents, neither of whom could understand the other's child. Margaret wonders what her Aunt Shaw will say when she learns of her engagement. "I can guess," said Thornton; "her first exclamation will be, 'That man!'" "Hush!" said Margaret, "or I shall try and show you your mother's indignant tones, as she says, 'That woman!'" It is impossible, however, to dwell longer on this delightful story, and there is probably no reason to elucidate it, as it is doubtless perfectly well known to most readers of fiction.

There only remains now one work of this gifted and lamented author upon which to offer some observations. And this is in all respects the completest as a work of fiction (as it is the best) which has proceeded from her pen. *Wives and Daughters* exhibits the rich genius of Mrs. Gaskell in its last stage, when perfection had been attained, or at least a perfection as near as can be pointed to in any author. Unfinished as she left it, it still remains for us the best of all her novels, and one which can be recommended to all of her order as a specimen of purity, strength, and sweetness. It has not the quicksilver vivacity of Dickens, the poetic glow of Bulwer, or the wonderful dissection and penetration of Thackeray; but, in addition to a moderate development of the qualities for which these masters were famous, there is a radiating human affection beaming through all its pages. We are robbed of one scene, which in the hands of the author would have been inimitable, viz. the confession of Roger Hamley's love to Molly after his return, and the manner in which the confession would have been received by that charming heroine. There was much to tell in one chapter, we are informed, had the author but lived to tell it. The two persons who have all along been favourites with the reader are of course to be married; and one little anecdote which Mrs. Gaskell intended to relate of Cynthia Kirkpatrick is very characteristic. After her brother-in-law had become a celebrated traveller, his name was mentioned in certain circles which Cynthia frequented, with surprise, as being connected with her family: but it had never oc-

curred to her to mention the little fact. The reticence of some people is almost as remarkable a phenomenon as the silence of others. We think that, had Mrs. Gaskell lived, she would have given to the world a series of novels scarcely inferior to any which we have received from our best known writers of fiction. *Wives and Daughters* abundantly proves this. Regarded either as a piece of writing, or as a reproduction of character, it will stand a severe scrutiny. The only possible fault which might have a basis or foundation in fact is, that the style is never strong to overwhelming. It does not crush one by its force. The book is told rather with quietness than demonstration of power; but when the pathos comes it is natural and unstrained. It reflects the purity of the author's own mind: we see her lifted away from the grosser pursuits of earth, and beckoning those for whom she is writing to come away also into the purer air. Of course we do not escape the narration of trouble, misunderstanding, and regret; that would be for the writer to miss the highest part of her vocation, which is to teach through the ordinary media of all novelists. The plot of this book is of the most meagre description; it makes no demand on our faculties of wonder; it touches at times the springs of humour, and passes away again to call into action those of emotion. The simplest of human lives, with the most ordinary and peaceful of careers, in the majority of cases, are the groundwork of the narrative. But now see what the author has made of her materials. Where shall we find characters more carefully drawn than those of the two brothers Osborne and Roger Hamley, and Cynthia Kirkpatrick? In her way, the last-named is equal to Maggie Tulliver. It is perfect in finish—there is nothing to be desired, and no flaw to be found in the delineation. The same may be said of Osborne Hamley, a most difficult character to draw, and one which requires the negative power of repression in an author as well as the positive power of protrusion. We see less of this personage than of any other through the novel, and yet, on closing it, the figure of Osborne Hamley is one of the most abiding impressions left upon the memory. But a few touches here and there have given us an insight into the mind of the Squire's heir, and the fuller details we obtain of his brother do not suffice to hide him from the view. The same remark also applies to Cynthia. Although early impregnated with a feeling for her half pity, half abhorrence, there is no person whose fortunes kindle the kind of interest we feel in her to such a pitch, or in whose development and final goal we feel more concerned. At the moment she arrives at Mr. Gibson's from France we discover her disposition, and the full manifestation is only a question of time. The few glimpses of aristocratic life obtained are also true, and the aristocrats themselves are human beings, and not mere eccentricities or monstrosities, as is too often the case with sketches and portraits of beings of the upper classes. The amusing element in the story is supplied mostly through the aid of Mrs. Kirkpatrick (afterwards Gibson), whose character, however, is more contemptible than humorous in itself. Still, it is often

individuals of this description who are provocative of considerable mirth in others. Her determined angling for Mr. Gibson as her second husband causes some amusement, not unmingled with a disgust akin to that the unfortunate man himself must have felt when he discovered that he had requested a scheming widow to become his wife, and that the chances of the union had been patronizingly discussed beforehand by Lord and Lady Cumnor. But it is a relief to get away from these people into the company of Molly, Mr. Gibson's daughter, and a most bewitching heroine, though withal as sensible and staid a young lady as any whose acquaintance we make in our rambles through novels. For a time it seems as though misfortune and scheming were in combination to keep her out of the only position we can conceive possible for her—that of Roger Hamley's wife. Blindly and stupidly, perhaps, this youth is attracted by the superior brilliancy of Cynthia, and the exposed surface of her character. He never troubles himself to ask whether there is anything really worthy beneath the showy exterior, and it is when adversity alone demonstrates as usual the true metal of the real heroine that he awakes to the knowledge of the vast superiority of Molly over her attractive sister. It is only when trouble falls upon others that she appears to the best advantage. Then her woman's nature exhibits itself, and she pours forth the stream of long pent-up tenderness. Stay—one person had all along known her heart—Mr. Gibson could testify that it was as free of guile as it was eager to do good for others. Of all characters which seem to bear upon them the stamp of earthly perfection, this is one of the best. It seems to need no purifying, for there is no period when it appears to be mingled with dross. It is the veritable gold of human nature.

In her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*—which, by-the-bye, is another specimen of Mrs. Gaskell's excellent English, as well as a tribute to her sympathetic heart—she quotes some sentences which seem peculiarly applicable to herself and her novels. One who knew Charlotte Brontë intimately said of her—"She thought much of her duty, and had loftier and clearer notions of it than most people, and held fast to them with more success. It was done, it seems to me, with much more difficulty than people have of stronger nerves and better fortunes. All her life was but labour and pain; and she never threw down the burden for the sake of present pleasure. I don't know what use you can make of all I have said. I have written it with the strong desire to obtain appreciation for her. Yet, what does it matter? She herself appealed to the world's judgment for her use of some of the faculties she had—not the best—but still the only ones she could turn to strangers' benefit. They heartily, greedily, enjoyed the fruits of her labours, and then found out she was much to be blamed for possessing such faculties. Why ask for a judgment on her from such a world?" While it is quite true that these words taken literally have not such a direct reference to Mrs. Gaskell as they have to her much misrepresented and maligned friend, yet the spirit of them is so *à propos* to her own—that in which her work was always undertaken—

that we have ventured to quote them. Always perfectly conscientious, her first aim in the production of her novels was to be true to herself, and to the society which she professed to depict. There is, perhaps, less of absolute exaggeration in the characters she has drawn than in the works of most authors of fiction. The person who stands clearest in this respect compared with others is the author of *The Newcomes*, whom she and her friend, the writer of *Jane Eyre*, concurred in regarding as the master-spirit of fiction. Those who study her intimately will easily condone the few unimportant faults she may possess in consideration of the many and great merits which completely overshadow them. It is impossible to read any author without some degree of difference arising between our own mind and his. If we agree with his method we despise his power to draw character; or, if we are enchanted with his power of individuality, we are, perchance, annoyed by his defective finish. In Mrs. Gaskell's case we shall find a large call upon our admiration in both respects.

The taunt was once thrown out against the novelist of Haworth, that she was an excellent artist as far as concerned the depicting of "governesses," a class of beings with whom she was supposed to be most in unison, as she was intimately acquainted with their position and trials, &c. The taunt, however, has now completely lost its force, and the genius which conceived *Shirley* and *Jane Eyre* has been almost universally acknowledged, certainly in every quarter where her work has been fairly read and tested by all who are capable of forming an intelligent opinion thereupon. We can well afford, therefore, to leave the charge that Mrs. Gaskell is a tolerable artist so far as local colour is concerned, to work itself out, as it most assuredly will. What novelist is not a local artist in one sense? Whether he depicts life as he sees it in Whitechapel or in Manchester, his colouring must be local; the question is, is it true? Landseer was a great artist, though his vocation, his *spécialité*, was of the narrowest description. Yet where are the pictures besides his own, which represent dogs with brains, and thus reproduce them with the fidelity of nature? The question is not so much to consider, in speaking of the novelist, whether he gives us all classes of life, as is he exact in those particular instances which he professes to delineate? The humblest animal, faithfully represented, is a better work of art than any caricature of humanity. This principle, which is indubitable, is fast becoming more generally recognized, though in the matter of the novel it has been somewhat slow of acceptance. Let it be strictly applied to Mrs. Gaskell's writings, and we fearlessly assert that the result will be in placing her in a very high position amongst our writers of fiction. She never cared to pander to popularity by the production of stories which it is considered are eminently fitted to adorn the numerous libraries. She wrote first for the sake of truth, and secondly for posterity. The first object has been, it is generally conceded, strictly accomplished; the second we can well afford to leave in the hands of those to whom she appealed.

Finally, in stating the qualities for which, as a novelist, Mrs. Gaskell

is most conspicuous, we should enumerate them in the following order:—individuality, force, truthfulness, and purity. As regards the first-named quality no one would be inclined to dispute her possession of it after reading *Mary Barton*, *Ruth*, or *Wives and Daughters*. The power of detaching a human unit, with all its special thoughts, griefs, hopes, and fears, from the rest of its kind, is in full force in all the works we have named. Indeed, there is scarcely any contemporary author who has excelled her in this respect. But upon that quality, and also upon her force or power, we have sufficiently enlarged already. Concerning the truthfulness of Mrs. Gaskell there is room for genuine approval. Into whatever sphere of life she conveys her readers, they are conscious that there is no exaggeration, no undue exaltation of this person, and no undue depression of the other. Upon this estimable quality we should be inclined to build most fearlessly for her assurance of immortality. Yet while there is no quality which should singly so well ensure it, if any work is to live and have a constant impression upon successive generations it must be combined with qualities which may seem humbler, but which in reality have more vitality in them from the fact that however the world changes their special power remains the same. Let Mrs. Gaskell's novels be read after the lapse of a hundred years, and one feels that the verdict delivered then would be that they were penned by the hand of a true observer—one who not only studied human nature with a desire, but a capacity, to comprehend it. This is one of the great motive powers which will ever keep the name of the author green in the public remembrance. The other principal quality to assist this consummation is purity. We were struck in reading her various volumes with this fact—that there is really less in them than there is in most other authors which she herself could wish to be altered. In fact, there is no purer author in modern times. And what has she lost by being pure? Has she failed to give a fair representation of any class of human beings whom she professes to depict? Not one; and her work stands now as an excellent model for those who would avoid the tendencies of the sensuous school, and would seek another basis upon which to acquire a reputation which should have some chances of durability. The author of *Wives and Daughters* will never cease to hold a high place in our regard. Could she do so we should despair for the future of fiction in England. Hers was one of those spirits which led the way to a purer day. The darkness out of which she assisted to bring us with her healthful work is passing away; and it is well to remember, in the splendour of a superior light, our indebtedness to those luminaries—conspicuous amongst whom is the writer whose works have been passed in review—who first lifted the veil of the Cimmerian darkness which at one period threatened to envelop our imaginative literature.

G. B. S.

Cruelty to Animals.

THERE is always something repulsive about the analysis of mean forms of crime. Great sins have, at all events, an intellectual interest, and a study of the causes which lead men to the commission of them may be as attractive as a tragedy. If the subject of the present essay were of this number, there would be no need to apologise for beginning it with an enumeration of the shapes which it takes or of the causes to which it is attributable. Cruelty, whether to men or animals, has no similar charm. If Othello had stuck pins into Desdemona instead of killing her, even Shakespeare could hardly have made the theme a fit one for the dramatist's purpose, and it is only the knowledge that the cruel intention is assumed, not real, that makes *The Taming of the Shrew* endurable. The one ground that justifies an analysis of cruelty to animals is that it may help us to repress it more effectually. Before coming to this, however, it may be well to consider the grounds on which repression is justifiable. There is often an obvious uncertainty upon this point in the minds of the magistrates who have to administer the law. They know that certain forms of cruelty are forbidden by Act of Parliament, and they have usually, though not invariably, sufficient respect for this authority not to dismiss a case in which the cruelty has been unmistakeably proved. But their unwillingness to apply the law to analogous, or even to cognate, cases shows that they are acting on precedent rather than on principle, and that in their hearts they think the Act a mistake. Happily, the continued application of the law must in time have an educating influence even on magistrates, and so long as cruelty to animals is forbidden it is a matter of secondary moment on what theory it is forbidden. For example, the argument that cruelty to animals leads to cruelty to men, though not the ground on which we should be most disposed to rest the case, is perfectly valid so far as it goes. The training which allows men to find pleasure in watching the suffering of animals, or at all events to ill-treat them without any thought of the pain which they inflict, is not calculated to make them keenly alive to the pain which they inflict upon one another. The Italian peasant who showers blows upon his prostrate horse has a knife ready for any one who ventures to remonstrate with him. In England the passage from cruelty to assassination is not quite so short, but the records of the police courts show that even here there is too much similarity between the treatment of animals and the treatment of women and children. Free indulgence in the abuse of dumb helplessness is not calculated to quicken sensibility towards helplessness which is often all the more irritating because it is not dumb. Again, a large part of the police regulations under which we live are framed

for the express purpose of saving us from needless annoyance, and to humane persons there can be no greater annoyance than to see animals ill-treated. The worst thing about the snowstorm which annually puts the administration of London out of gear for a week is the avoidable and unavoidable suffering which horses undergo in consequence of it. It is not pleasant to have to walk up to your ankles in half-frozen brown mud, and to reflect how easily it might have been swept off the pavement, but it is worse to see an overloaded horse quivering under the carter's whip in sheer inability to overcome the combination of slippery streets and clogged wheels. In London in such a case as this there is the possibility, at all events, of finding a policeman; but in the country the spectator, unless he were possessed of exceptional physical strength, would be obliged, in the absence of a law, to content himself with unavailing remonstrances or equally unavailing threats. We have just as much right to ask the Government to protect us from spectacles of cruelty as we have to make a similar request in respect of violations of decency. If it is admitted that nothing should be permitted in public which can offend a reasonably modest woman, there is fully as much ground for prohibiting anything that can offend a reasonably humane man. Nor is it only that cruelty gives pain to those who witness it; it has the further demerit of depriving those who practise it of a great deal of intelligent pleasure. A humane people will ordinarily be fond of animals; and considering how universal the possession of animals is, and how many are the occupations which bring men into contact with animals, anything which makes the love of them general tends by a direct and natural process to add to the happiness of those who have them or are concerned with them. If it is an argument in favour of popular education that, by enabling men to read, it gives them the means of obtaining a great deal of enjoyment from which they would otherwise be shut out, the same reasoning will apply to anything which teaches men not to deprive themselves of the enjoyment which is derived from association with animals. There is not so much happiness in the world that any means of increasing the amount can be allowed to go unimproved.

The best ground, however, on which the prevention of cruelty to animals can be rested is that stated by Mill in his *Principles of Political Economy*. "The reasons," he says, "for legal intervention in favour of children apply not less strongly to the case of those unfortunate slaves and victims of the most brutal part of mankind—the lower animals. It is by the grossest misunderstanding of the principles of liberty that the infliction of exemplary punishment on ruffianism practised towards these defenceless creatures has been treated as a meddling by government with things beyond its province; an interference with domestic life. The domestic life of domestic tyrants is one of the things which it is the most imperative on the law to interfere with. What it would be the duty of a human being possessed of the requisite physical strength, to prevent by force if attempted in his presence, it cannot be less incumbent on

society generally to repress. The existing laws of England on the subject are chiefly defective in the trifling, often almost normal, maximum to which the penalty, even in the worse cases, is limited." The truth is, that the burden of proof does not rest with those who defend the law, but with those who impugn it. *Primâ facie*, it is the business of governments to prevent the infliction of needless pain within the limits of their jurisdiction, and they who assert their right to inflict it on the lower animals are bound to adduce reasons why they should be taken out of the category of protected beings. It is not enough to say that they have no souls, or that they are not Christians. If this argument has any meaning, it must imply that only those who deserve to live happily in a future life have any claim upon the State in this life—a highly dangerous argument for us all in a sceptical age, and for brutal and cruel persons in any age. The question is not whether animals understand that they are suffering, or whether their sufferings are soothed by religious hopes, but whether they feel suffering. If they do, no defence can be constructed for the man who makes them undergo suffering causelessly which might not be extended to some classes of human beings. The Spaniard who pleased himself with the spectacle of a Jew or a Moor burning at the stake might, and probably did, say, "They are not Christians." The planter who occasionally flogged a negro to death would rarely admit that his victim had a soul. If animals do not share the reasoning faculties of men, they share their sensitive faculties; and where cruelty is concerned, it is more to the purpose to say that the sufferer feels, than that he thinks. It will be a bad day for our human dependants if we ever allow ourselves to be reasoned out of protecting our animal dependants.

In what follows, therefore, it will be taken for granted that cruelty to animals is an offence which deserves no sympathy. The only point which will be held to admit of argument is, whether particular modes of treating animals comes under the head of cruelty. If they do, they will usually be found to fall into one of three classes—cruelty to animals employed for use; cruelty to animals employed for pleasure; cruelty to animals employed for scientific purposes. The two chief uses to which animals are put are draught and food. Cruelty to animals employed for draught is inflicted either by using them when in an unfit state, or by ill-treating them when in use. The positive ill treatment of animals ought to be punished in every case; but as regards the employment of them in an unfit condition, it is necessary to take into account the circumstances of the person who employs them. It often happens that the owner of a lame or worn-out horse is quite rich enough to replace it, and abstains from doing so either from carelessness or from calculation. So long as his work gets done he does not trouble himself about the suffering caused to the animal; or he may even buy worthless horses of set purpose because he reckons that, by disregarding all considerations of humanity, he gets his work done more cheaply.

Wherever, therefore, a man in a fair way of business is found sending out horses that are either too weak or too lame to do any work, or to do the heavy work assigned to them, a case of inexcusable cruelty is at once established. The master is responsible, not only for the cruelty displayed in working the horse at all, but for the secondary cruelty which his servants are in a measure forced to commit in consequence. It is very probable that this latter cruelty is really useless for its own purpose, and that no amount of ill-usage will get any more work out of the animal than it is willing to do without ill-usage. But unless the servant is an unusually humane man, he is not likely to realise this. There are some drivers, no doubt, who would ill-treat their horses under any circumstances, but it may be assumed that the majority are led to do so in the first instance by more being demanded of them than it is possible for them to perform with such animals as those of which they have the charge. It is necessary that any instance of ill-usage under these circumstances should be punished, but it should never be punished without equal or greater punishment being meted out to the master who has tempted his servant to cruelty by making it apparently impossible for him to obey orders without resorting to it. There is another class of cases, however, in which the owner, who will then be usually the driver also, is a very poor man. His horse, no doubt, has long got beyond the stage in which it can work without pain, but then its master may have long got beyond that stage in his own person. As you pass the pair in the street, you notice that the horse looks hardly fit for anything but the knacker's yard; but a second look shows you that, if Western civilisation recognised euthanasia as a proper ending for worn-out human beings, the owner would speedily follow his horse. Under such circumstances, the employment of worn-out animals seems to be only a part of the universal curse. So long as there is poverty and suffering among men there will be poverty and suffering among the animals belonging to them. Thousands have to work when their bones are racked by rheumatism, or stiffened by age, or weakened by hunger, and we cannot claim for the poor man's horse a better lot than has been apportioned to his master. There is a limit of course to the application of this plea, because no degree of poverty can excuse working an animal in a state in which every movement is a cause of acute pain, and the plea is wholly irrelevant in cases of ill-usage. Community of suffering ought rather to produce a fellow-feeling for those who have to suffer with you.

Cruelty to animals used for food has been brought pre-eminently forward of late years by reason of the increase in the demand for cattle for the London meat market. This demand has given great importance to the question of transit. The carriage of beasts, either by railway or steamship, affords room for combining in the treatment of them almost every known form of ill-usage. They are cruelly beaten to get them into the truck or over the gangway; they are crammed into spaces too small for them; they are kept without any sufficient supply of food or water during the journey. If it is made by sea they have no air

to breathe; if it is made by land they are bruised by the endless jolts to which carriages unprovided with springs or buffers are unavoidably exposed. When they reach their journey's end they are often hardly able to move, and beating or tail-twisting is usually the only means which suggests itself to the drover of getting over their inability. Not very long since this description was universally true; but within the last few years considerable improvements have been effected in the treatment of cattle during a journey, under the orders of the Privy Council. Besides cruelties during transit there are the various cruelties incident to careless or unskilful slaughtering, or to vicious modes of slaughtering resorted to for the supposed object of improving the quality of the animals as articles of food.

The second kind of cruelty is inflicted for the purposes of pleasure, and here we come across some of the most difficult problems connected with the subject. This class of cruelty may affect either the animals who are themselves the instruments of sport, as horses in hunting or racing; or the animals who are the objects of sport, as foxes or game; or the animals which have to be destroyed lest they should injure sport, as vermin and birds of prey. As regards the first class, no difficulty can arise. There can, as a rule, be no excuse for cruel usage of a hunter or racer, because with proper care, and under proper treatment, the animal's own instincts will ordinarily teach him to do all that his rider wishes. As regards the third class, again, the difficulty is one of detail, not of principle. No one denies that vermin may be killed in order to prevent them from killing more useful animals, and few will deny that they ought to be killed in such a way as not to subject them to needless torture. But, in connection with the second class, animals considered as objects of sport, the question presents itself whether sport as such is not cruel, and, if so, whether it ought not to be abstained from by good men now, and prohibited by law as soon as public opinion can be educated up to the necessary sacrifice. Those who say yes to these enquiries forget that, though animals ought to be protected against needless suffering, the measure of what constitutes necessary suffering is to be found in the legitimate wants of mankind. The moral lawfulness of sports which inflict suffering on animals must be decided by the consideration whether they answer any of these legitimate wants. As regards the three principal classes of field sports, hunting, shooting, and fishing, the defence to the charge of inflicting needless suffering seems to be complete. The physical, moral, and, when confined within reasonable limits, social advantages of each are conspicuous. Those who dispute them do so for the most part on some side issue. They say that a gallop across country can be enjoyed without a fox in front, or they denounce battue shooting, and its concomitant excessive preserving. It may be admitted that if all the enjoyment of fox-hunting could be had with the part of the fox cut out, the fox might fairly plead that he is needlessly made a victim. This, however, is a question of fact. To say that men

ought to like a gallop without a purpose as well as a gallop with a purpose is not the same thing as proving that they do like it as well. A young man living in London may walk to Hampstead and back every day to keep himself in health, but no amount of doctor's certificates will convince him that he derives the same pleasure from the exercise as if he were taking a walking tour. So, as regards shooting, there are forms of the sport which seem carefully designed to exclude the fatigue, the exposure, the uncertainty, which give it genuine excitement, and to substitute an excitement which, as being chiefly sustained by the quantity of game killed, seems to belong rather to the poulterer than to the sportsman. There is no inconsistency, therefore, in saying that pigeon-shooting is cruel, and that deer-stalking and partridge-shooting are not cruel. The pigeon suffers no more than the partridge, but he suffers without any man being the better for it. The one sport is a source of health and pleasant excitement; the other gives just so much health as can be imparted by a drive from London to Fulham, and so much excitement as might be obtained on a croquet lawn, provided that the balls could feel pain. Everything that tends to make sport physically easy tends in the same proportion to make it morally hurtful. The line between the sportsman and the man who loves cruelty for cruelty's sake, would soon be effaced if the ideas of exertion, of self-denial, of endurance, of labour, of submission to privation, were altogether dissociated from field sports.

Cruelty to animals for the real or supposed furtherance of scientific research has to a great extent escaped notice, partly from the secrecy with which the experiments are usually conducted, and partly from the fact that, by the existing law in this country, cruelty is only illegal when practised on domestic animals. The conditions under which the dissection of living animals ought to be permitted may be easily stated; the difficulty lies in determining how far they have been complied with in particular cases. The doctrine that pain inflicted on animals is not cruelty when it satisfies a legitimate want of man obviously covers all cases in which vivisection leads to the alleviation of human suffering. It does not cover cases in which the only possible object of the operation is the gratification of a purely intellectual curiosity. However praiseworthy such curiosity may be in itself, it has no merit when it is indulged in without regard to the pain it causes to other creatures. It so happens, however, that many of the most valuable improvements in practical medicine have indirectly resulted from experiments undertaken without any conscious reference on the part of the operator to the end actually attained. Thus we are met by the dilemma that if vivisection is allowed in consideration of its accidental benefits it is difficult to place any check upon mere curiosity, while if it is restricted to cases in which the object is the solution of some special medical problem these accidental benefits may be lost. A distinction may perhaps be drawn between operations which can be performed while the animal is under the influence of anæsthetics, and experiments directed to ascertain the effects of pain. To the former

class, provided that the animal is killed as soon as the operation is over, no objection need be raised; but in the latter case, where the suffering inflicted is indisputable and irremediable, something more ought to be insisted on than evidence of a mere general possibility that medical science may be promoted by the experiment. Rhetorical appeals to an imaginary incompatibility between scientific eminence and cruelty must be set aside as irrelevant. No intellectual eminence implies the possession of moral virtues. A man is not necessarily a good father because he is an eminent geologist, or a faithful friend because he has made some valuable discoveries in chemistry; and there is no more reason why he should have a special tenderness for animals because he is a great physiologist. The ardent pursuit of science may have the same deadening effect on the virtues of sympathy and compassion that the ardent pursuit of any other good object tends to have. There is no reason to claim for experimental physiology an exemption from human weakness which cannot be claimed either for religion or philanthropy. If theological and social enthusiasts are often careless as to the amount of suffering caused by the carrying out of their designs for the moral or material elevation of mankind, it is hard to see why scientific enthusiasts should be less careless in the promotion of man's intellectual elevation. No class of men can be safely made judges in their own cause. An appeal must lie to the common sense of the community in all cases which involve the infliction of pain in the alleged interest of humanity. It follows from this that the practice of vivisection ought not to enjoy any special freedom from legal process. The tribunals which decide upon ordinary charges of cruelty ought equally to have jurisdiction in charges of cruelty against men of science. If it can be shown that their experiments are carried on for the mere purpose of demonstrating over again what has been sufficiently demonstrated already, or to give a manual dexterity which can be obtained in other ways, or without the use of anæsthetics where it is possible to apply them, conviction should follow as surely as in any other instance of wanton brutality. When a case can be set up in favour of the medical or scientific value of the experiment of sufficient force to convince men of ordinary sense, the summons would be dismissed, and in the event of either the general or the scientific public feeling aggrieved by the result there is the possibility of fresh legislation as an ultimate resource.

Another help to the repression of cruelty to animals is a clear appreciation of the moral causes which produce it. One great source of cruelty is thoughtlessness. If people would be at the trouble of considering the natural consequences of their actions, a great degree of unintentional brutality would be avoided. Probably few well-to-do people would acknowledge to themselves that their favourite horse was destined to end his days in a night cab. But if they would stop and follow his career in imagination from the time that he is sold on the score that he is getting rather past his work, they would see how inevitable the descent is. Dogs and cats, again, suffer a great deal from this same cause. Instead of

being drowned as puppies or kittens, they are kept to amuse a child, and, when they cease to answer this purpose, they are given to anyone who will consent to take them. The unwilling receiver will often be some poor person in the neighbourhood, who takes the gift to oblige the cook or "the young ladies." An animal thus placed out in life is not likely to receive much kindly treatment, and a moment's thought would suffice to show that to save an animal from death for no other purpose than to consign it to probable or certain misery, is only a subtle kind of cruelty. Another form of thoughtlessness which leads to a great deal of undesigned cruelty is to be seen in the omission to use steam rollers on newly macadamised roads, or to provide gravel for paved streets in slippery weather. In London the former omission is now becoming rare, but a few years ago it was the universal practice to leave the stones on the roads to be gradually crushed by the wheels of the vehicles passing along them. As in a great number of cases the weight which a given horse can draw is calculated on the assumption that all the conditions of surface and gradients will be as favourable as possible, it was a common thing to see a heavily-laden waggon stranded hopelessly in a flinty desert, to the middle of which the horses, by straining every sinew to the utmost, had just managed to bring it. It is not to be supposed that the authorities deliberately intended to cause all this suffering. It is quite possible that the same vestryman who in the morning had voted against the purchase of a steam-roller, would in the afternoon have applied for a summons against a carter for flogging his horses in order to get them to do a fractional part of the work which a steam-roller ought to have done before. But the two ideas were not associated in his mind, and he did not stop to think that it was the vestry, not the carter, who was really to blame.

A second source of cruelty is ignorance. Those who have the charge of animals are often cruel because they do not know how to make them do what they want without being cruel. This is very much seen in the training of animals. Our knowledge how to set to work is very much on a par with our knowledge a century ago how to train children. Punishment is the only method resorted to, and animals are so far worse off than children that they are never emancipated from the absolute control of those who have the power of punishing them. There is some cruelty, therefore, that must be acquiesced in, as the inevitable result of past ignorance. A horse who might have been taught to do this or that without the whip has only learned to do it under the whip, and is too old to understand a change of treatment. But, besides this, there is a great deal of cruelty which is due to present ignorance. A man has never been taught how to handle an animal properly, and his one idea is that the secret of success lies in violence; or he miscalculates the effect of this violence, and then gets angry with his beast because it has done what he made it do instead of what he meant it to do; or he has no knowledge of the strength of the obstacle to be got over, and attributes to vice or laziness what is really due to sheer inability; or he expects the animal

to divine his meaning by instinct, and punishes it because it has not done what he has never made it understand that it was to do.

Of course, it is often hard to draw the line between ignorance and brutality, and the habits which were originally attributable to the former cause may in the end be due rather to the latter. It will not do however to omit brutality from the list of causes of cruelty and to make ignorance bear all the blame, because in that case there would be no explaining the instances of cruelty which occur from time to time among the educated classes. A master of hounds ought to know something about horses; but a master of hounds has been known, while a carriage horse was standing quietly at the door of his house, to beat it savagely about the head and legs with a heavy hunting-whip, because it had jibbed in the park half an hour before. A Yorkshire magistrate ought to know something about horses; but a Yorkshire magistrate has been known to say on the bench that it is not cruelty to ride a horse so hard that it dies within a quarter of an hour after his rider has dismounted. And if brutality is not unknown among the educated classes, with whom self-restraint is to some extent a matter of habit, it is not likely to be unknown among a class which is not accustomed to restrain itself even when dealing with its fellows. It is not ignorance that leads men to throw their wives out of window, or to correct their children with the poker. Such acts as these are prompted by a vicious recklessness as to the suffering caused, or by a still more vicious pleasure in causing it. Where animals are concerned there is something of the same pleasure to be got from ill-treating them while there is comparatively no risk incurred by indulging in it. It may be conceded that what appears to be brutality is sometimes only temper, but the dividing line between brutality pure and simple and the blind rage which simulates brutality is very faintly drawn. There are cases, no doubt, in which anger, especially causeless anger, amounts for the time to something very like madness. But to allow of this plea being accepted by way of excuse for cruelty there must be no recognition of consequences discernible during the paroxysm. In the great majority of cases such a recognition is perfectly discernible. The angry man ill-treats his horse or his dog because it cannot retaliate, while he does not ill-treat his servant who may be able to thrash him in return, and can at all events prosecute him for assault.

Another cause of cruelty is avarice. To work animals beyond their strength or after their strength has gone, to underfeed them whilst in work, and to subject them to torture in order to make money by them, are varieties of cruelty which all spring from this one motive, and they include nearly all the commonest forms of the offence. It is avarice that puts a horse which is only fit for the knacker into the night cab; that keeps cattle without food or water on a journey; that allows lean stock to go to the brink of starvation in winter; that sends out one horse with a load which it requires two to draw without difficulty; that buys up worn-out horses on the calculation that if there is any work at all to be got out of them they will be a good investment; that puts beans inside a horse's shoes in order

to hide his lameness by making all the feet as tender as the lame foot. In fact, almost all second-hand cruelty is to be traced to this motive. Men who are in actual charge of animals may lose their temper with them, and be puzzled how to make them do their work; but the man who sends out animals, whether to work or to market, in an unfit state has ordinarily no excuse to offer for himself. Now and then he may be acting in ignorance or forgetfulness, but, for the most part, he acts upon calculation. Happily, if this is one of the most common causes of cruelty to animals, it is also one of the most easily dealt with. Where offences are matters of estimate the scale can be weighted on the side of virtue by a sufficient money penalty. The law is at present defective in not giving the magistrates the power to impose a fine of more than five pounds. There is a great deal of cruelty which, though not flagrant enough to make it prudent or even possible to punish it by imprisonment, is yet not adequately met by a fine which may not have the effect of making the offence too costly for repetition. If the offender found that every time he was discovered working lame horses or starving cattle he had to pay ten pounds, and if in addition the magistrates were empowered to order any animal past or unfit for work to be killed, or treated by a veterinary surgeon at the expense of its owner, cruelty would soon cease to be a paying speculation.

The repression of cruelty to animals is secured principally by the Act 12 & 13 Victoria, cap. 92. The offences punishable under this statute are the cruel beating, ill-treatment, over-driving, abusing, or torturing of any animal; the keeping or using any place for fighting or baiting any animal, whether domestic or wild; the neglect to provide food and water for impounded animals; the omitting to cut off the mane of any horse brought to a knacker's yard; the keeping horses so brought more than three days, neglecting to provide them with food and water during that time, working them or allowing them to leave the place for the purpose of being worked, and neglecting to describe them in a book so as to admit of their being identified; and the conveyance of animals in carts so as to subject them to unnecessary pain. Procuring or causing the commission of any of these offences counts as a distinct offence. The penalty for not feeding impounded animals is twenty shillings; for working horses from knackers' yards forty shillings for every day on which they shall be absent from the yard; for not writing a clear and distinct description of any horse brought to the yard forty shillings; for carrying animals cruelly three pounds; and for all other offences under the Act five pounds. Payment of these fines may be enforced by imprisonment with or without hard labour for two months, and two justices or one police magistrate may at their discretion imprison the offender with or without hard labour for three months. Any constable upon his own view, or upon the complaint of any person giving his name and address, may take into custody any person offending against the Act and convey him before a magistrate. Or a summons may be applied for from any justice of the peace within whose jurisdiction the offence shall have been committed. Or, if there is reason to

believe that an offender will evade the summons, a warrant may be issued for his apprehension.

A law forbidding cruelty to animals operates in two ways—directly by the fear of punishment, indirectly by the creation of a sentiment opposed to cruelty. The effect of the first is necessarily imperfect from the fact that, as animals cannot lay complaints for themselves, the proportion of convictions to offences must be exceedingly small. Even in a large town a great deal of cruelty goes undetected; and, if so, how many unnoticed cases must there not be in country roads, in solitary fields, in mines and quarries! This consideration makes it very important that, wherever any charge of flagrant cruelty is made good, the sentence should be as severe as the law allows. If the majority of such offences were detected the probability of exposure would in itself serve as a deterrent influence; but, where only a fraction are detected, this probability becomes so small that it needs to be supplemented by the knowledge that exposure if it does come will be followed by real suffering. The indirect operation of such a law is fortunately much more extensive. In the first place the acts which are forbidden come by degrees to be regarded as immoral as well as illegal, and in this way the number of those who are disposed to commit them is lessened. Next, the growth of a disapproving sentiment influences those whose business it is to enforce the law. It is easier to obtain convictions for cruelty than it was some years ago, because even magistrates who dislike the law are coming to dislike still more the comments which any gross evasion of their duty is likely to provoke. And, lastly, in proportion as cruelty to animals becomes unpopular as well as illegal, the chances of its detection are increased. This is shown by the change which the procedure of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has undergone of late years. When it was first founded its officers were exclusively employed in patrolling the streets of London and summoning persons guilty of cruelty. This method has now been abandoned, because the whole time of the staff is taken up in investigating and prosecuting acts of cruelty which are brought to the notice of the Society by private persons.

The better prevention of cruelty to animals depends on the combination of several separate agencies. Something may in time be done by giving kindness to animals a higher and more constant place in moral training. The clergy, for example, may preach about it; and in districts where the opportunities for cruelty are many, and the practice of it frequent, they could hardly make a better use of the pulpit. One reason, perhaps, why the Anglican clergy have so little influence is that they so rarely descend from generalities to those special sins which their congregations are most tempted to commit. A man who interested himself in the condition of donkeys at a watering place, or of cattle in the neighbourhood of a market, might find that he could wish no better introduction to donkey boys and drovers. They might think him meddlesome at first, but they could no longer regard his sermons as things with which they

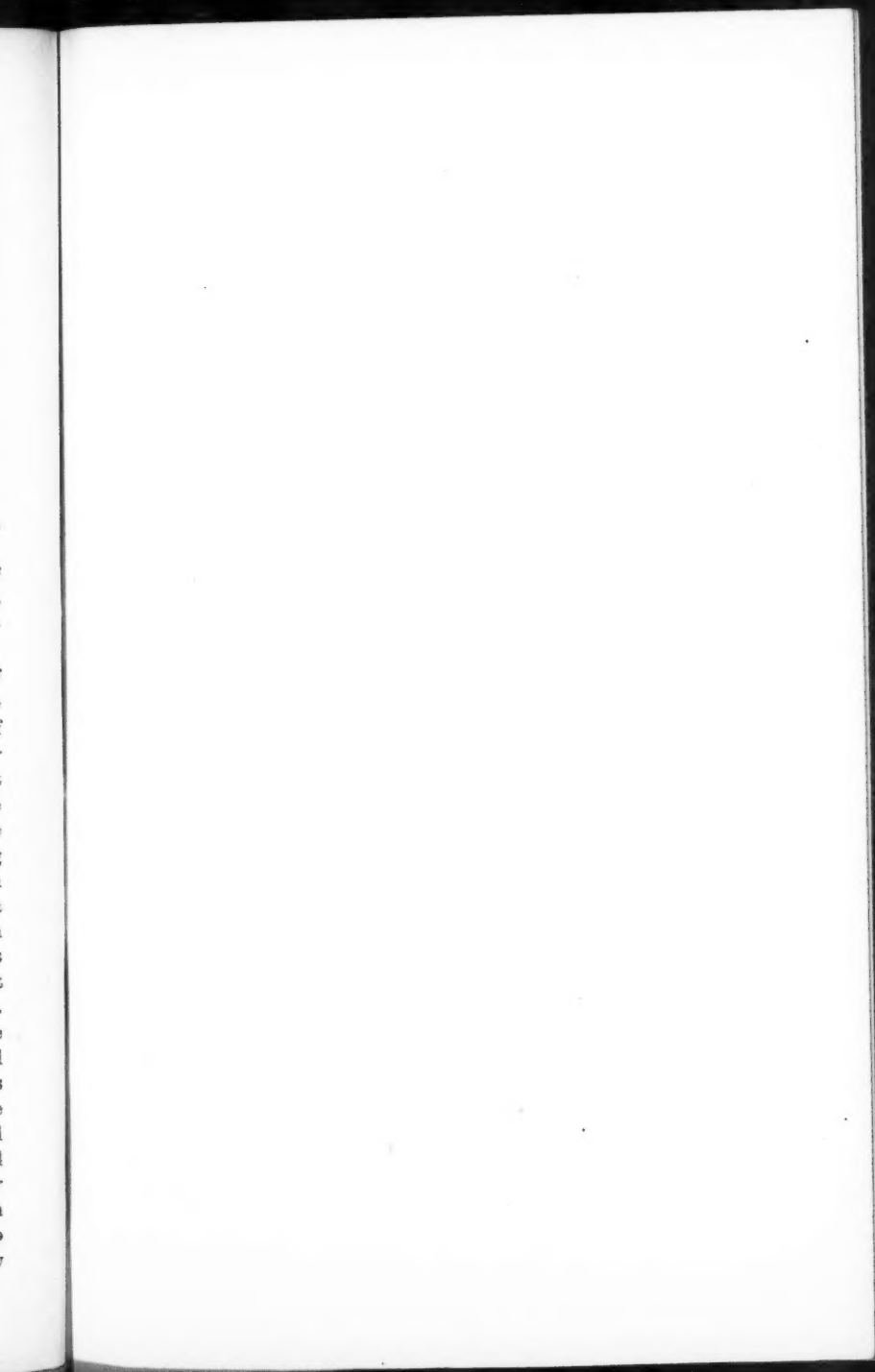
have no concern, and which are meant exclusively for gentlefolk. The managers and teachers of elementary schools may render a similar service to their scholars. Care should be taken not to indulge in any of the sentimental regrets over the death of animals which are sometimes to be seen in the columns of that otherwise excellent journal *The Animal World*. To kill an animal, if it be done without inflicting more than momentary pain, is not cruelty; indeed in proportion as people become genuinely human the number of animals killed will very much increase. The point to be insisted on is the duty of not adding torture to death, or deriving amusement from the mere spectacle of death. Still, if this educational influence is to be really effective, it must always be backed up by the consciousness that there is a law behind it. Happily, Englishmen have not yet grown so philosophical as to refuse to obey a law of which they do not know the reason, and it may often cut short some display of unseasonable casuistry to be able to say that the law forbids the ill-treatment of animals, and that those who disobey it will have to reckon with the policeman. In this respect the magistrates have very great power of checking cruelty. If their decisions had always been satisfactory, both as regards their definitions of what constitutes cruelty and their punishment of it when defined, public opinion on this subject would have been very much sounder than it yet is. A judge is bound to remember that, though it rests with him to inflict either the maximum penalty prescribed or anything short of it, the intention of the Legislature in appointing a maximum penalty is that it should be inflicted in all flagrant cases. What would be thought of a judge who habitually dismissed men convicted of homicide only short of murder with the very lightest sentence for manslaughter? Yet a magistrate who punishes a case of aggravated cruelty by a fine instead of by imprisonment, or by a fine of one pound instead of by a fine of five pounds, is acting in the same spirit. When Parliament says that any man who shall cruelly beat or ill-treat any animal shall pay a penalty not exceeding five pounds it prescribes in effect a graduated scale of fines of which the lighter are to be reserved for lighter offences, and the heavier to be assigned to more serious offences. A magistrate who inflicts a fine of two pounds, and accompanies it by a statement that it is one of the worst cases that ever came before him, flies directly in the face of the statute.

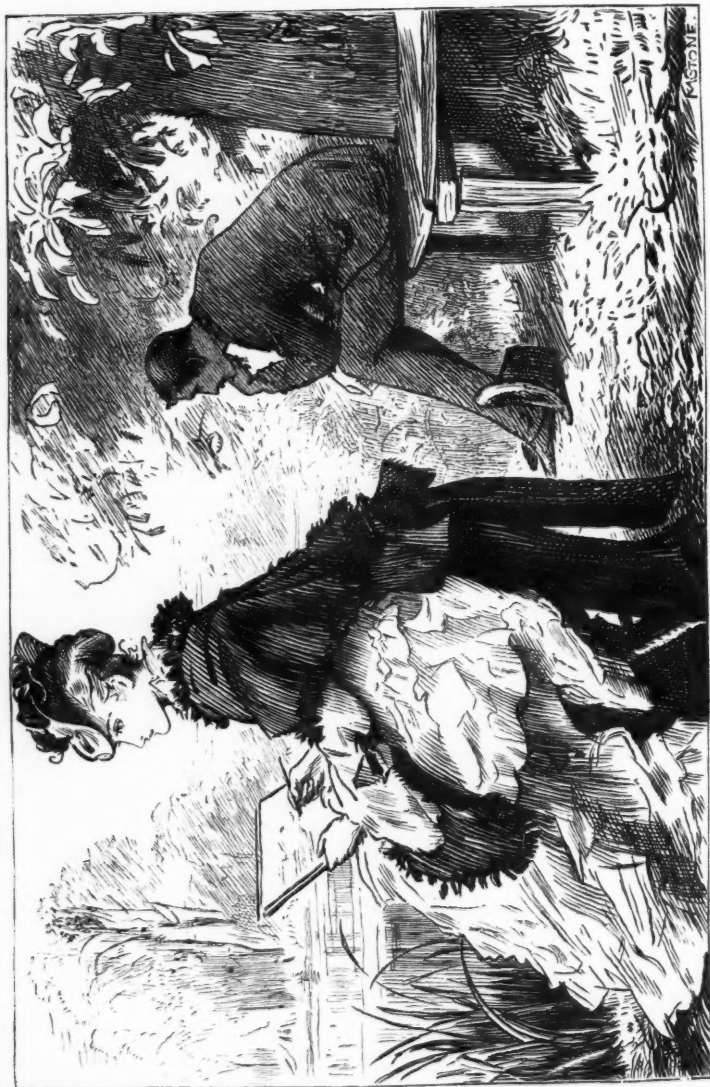
There is room, again, for some amendments in the statute itself. Of these the most necessary is a more extended definition of the term "animal." It is now applied, for all the purposes of the Act but one, to "domestic" animals only, and the consequence of this limitation is that many forms of cruelty lie altogether beyond the reach of the law. Thus very gross cruelty is practised in connection with exhibitions of performing wild beasts. The ordinary instruments of the lion-tamer are, as every frequenter of such shows must occasionally have observed, the steel whip, the pitchfork, and the hot iron. From time to time these have to be resorted to, even in public, and when dealing with trained animals;

and it is easy to divine how much more liberal must be the use of them in private, and while the training process is still going on. A wild animal, if kept in a state of confinement, might possibly be brought within the Act, but the success of the attempt would be very doubtful, and it is beyond question that acts of cruelty to wild animals not so kept may be committed with impunity. A man convicted of roasting a cat alive, would certainly be punished; a man convicted of roasting a hare alive, would certainly escape scot free. It is an offence against the statute to pluck live poultry; it is not an offence against the statute to pluck live quails. There can be no reason why the prohibition in the second section of the Act, to "abuse or torture any animal," should be restricted by the twentieth section to any domestic animal. The objection that would probably be raised against the omission of this limitation would be, that trapping of vermin would be impossible if the Act were thus amended. But the trapping of vermin is either a necessary means of protecting more valuable animals or it is not. In the former case, it is not cruelty; in the latter, it ought not to be permitted. Other improvements in the Act would be raising the fine to 10*l.*, the making imprisonment, without fine, obligatory in cases of repeated convictions, and, where the cruelty is very aggravated, in the case of a first offence. It is impossible to prevent magistrates from exercising discretion as to what constitutes aggravated cruelty, and wherever there is discretion it may of course be misused; but something would be effected if the Act of Parliament directed them to pass sentence of imprisonment under certain circumstances, instead of, as now, giving them the power to do so "if they shall think fit." As the law stands, a case may be stated for the opinion of the Court of Queen's Bench whether the cruelty proved constitutes cruelty as defined by the Act. Power might also be given to take the opinion of the Court whether the facts proved constitute cruelty.

Even with the law remaining as it is, a great deal more might be done to prevent cruelty if the public were more bent upon putting it down. Where the victim of an injury can never make a complaint for itself, the detection and punishment of crime must, especially under a system of law such as ours, be the work of voluntary agents. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is always ready to undertake prosecutions, provided that the fulfilment of certain conditions can be assured. These conditions are—that it is supplied with sufficient funds, that it is furnished with sufficient information, and that this information is properly supported. It is common enough to see indignant letters in the *Times*, asking why the Society does not do this or that. Do the writers of these letters contribute to the Society's funds? There is no means of defraying the cost of investigation and prosecution except the voluntary subscriptions of those who take an interest in the purpose for which it exists. Every additional guinea given to the Society is so much given to the maintenance of an additional officer, and consequently to the investigation and prosecution of additional cases. But, however large the Society's staff might

be, it would still be impossible for it to have officers employed except at what may be called centres of cruelty; and even in these much might go on behind the officer's back. If the public will supply information of acts of cruelty committed under their eyes and within their knowledge, they are to that extent doing the work of an officer. The Society issues forms, setting out the kind of particulars which should be forwarded to them; and it undertakes to make inquiry into every case so brought to its knowledge, and, if sufficient evidence is forthcoming, to prosecute the offender, without expense to the complainant or his witnesses. It often happens, however, that complaints of this kind have to be passed over because those who make them will not appear to substantiate them before a magistrate. Anyone who acts in this way is really little better than an accomplice in the cruelty of which he complains. He knows or believes that it has been committed, but he will not take the trifling trouble, or undergo the trifling annoyance, of repeating in the witness-box what he has already written to the Society. A great number of additional convictions might be obtained if the public were more active in reporting cases to the Society, and a still wider effect would be produced by the general sense of being under surveillance which would be created in those who have the care of animals. There would be little overt cruelty in a street or village in which an officer of the Society was known to be on duty; and if private persons would be at the pains of noting down all cases of cruelty which pass under their eye, the offenders would come in time to understand that every passer-by might be as good as an officer of the Society for their particular benefit. Again, if the Society were better supplied with money, it would be able to combine its old and its present methods of procedure. It is a decided gain that its officers should now be employed almost exclusively in following up information furnished by private persons; but it would be better still if it were able to employ its existing staff in this manner, and to maintain an additional staff as a patrol in places where acts of cruelty are especially common. The presence of a dozen active officers in the streets of London, for example, would soon make a visible difference in the condition and treatment of the horses employed there; and if the money were to be had, this work might at once be done, without the ordinary work of the Society being left undone. With larger funds, the Society might also employ officers for a given time in typical districts. A considerable stimulus might be given to individual energy if half-a-dozen competent officers were set to work for six months in a mining district, on the towing-paths of some canal-system, or in the neighbourhood of a group of seaside towns. Persons specially interested in the prevention of particular forms of cruelty might contribute to special funds set apart for this purpose. Lamentations over the amount of cruelty practised on animals are common enough; what is needed to make them either sincere or useful is a serious determination on the part of those who utter them that nothing shall be wanting on their part to make the law effectual.





MISS WYLDWYL WAS SKETCHING.

Young Brown.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER III.

BEAUMANOIR.



LIEUTENANT BROWN was well received by the Duke of Courthope when he presented his letters of introduction. His Grace had lived more and more in the country of late years, and his place, though very stately, was somewhat dull. The arrival of a stranger properly introduced would have been welcome therefore at any time, and the visit of an officer from the seat of war was an event which interested all the county.

The Duke of Courthope, like most provincial magnates, was fond of early news and exclusive information, and he generally contrived to obtain it, for the world is very eager to convey both verbal and epistolary information to a nobleman of his

rank. No one was sooner acquainted with the changing events of current history. He knew the very latest movements in party politics, and as they were often false movements, made by persons who had to retrace their steps, he had rather a less accurate idea of the state of affairs than the outside public. He was present at all the false starts for power, so that when the race was run and won, nobody was more surprised at the result than himself. He had around him at Lieutenant Brown's arrival the usual party which assembles at ducal palaces when pheasant shooting begins. They were mostly good shots, for his Grace, who sold his game by contract to a London poulterer, could not afford to have his birds knocked about, and did not like to have them made wild by random firing. There was a brace of parliamentary colonels, who always killed with their right and left barrels. There was a local banker,

who had an absurd resemblance to the Duke in dress, manners, and whiskers. There was a sprinkling of minor barons, a few official dependents who had prospered under the shadow of the great house, an Italian singer and his wife to amuse the evenings, and Lady Overlaw with her aunt the Countess of Clanmore to do the honours.

The Duke took a fancy to the young Indian soldier from the first; perhaps because his manners were perfectly free from either embarrassment or self-assertion. The Lieutenant never made his presence felt oppressively, for he had the secret of amusing himself without getting in other people's way. His voice was never heard at unseasonable times, and he was cheerful without being boisterous or brilliant.

"Come, Captain Brown, and shoot beside me," the Duke would say to him in high good humour, and giving him brevet rank by courtesy. His Grace liked a young man who never missed his bird, never fired first, and picked up the outsiders with unerring aim. The boy's silent, pleasant laughter and deferential manners won him, and while his Grace was amusing himself, he thought he was paying off his son's debt of gratitude very handsomely, so that his conscience approved him not a little.

There was also, however, a subtler influence than either of them could have explained, had they been interrogated, which drew those two together. That splendid Peer and the village lad who had showed such unusual qualities when put to the test had many thoughts in unison, and the speech of either found a natural echo in the other's mind. They both felt as soldiers, and despised trade; they had both an innate love of grandeur; they had even some physical peculiarities in common. Both were straight and tall, with a chest rather deep than broad, and admirably formed for exertion; but the face of William Brown was one which had not been seen in the Courthope family for nearly two centuries. It was frank and open during an ordinary conversation and when he was engaged in the common concerns of life. His smile was almost as innocent and winning as the Duke's own, and made all his countenance sparkle when lit up with it. But in moments when his thoughts were concentrated upon any serious subject, his heavy brows closed like a horseshoe, and his look was earnest and intense. A very grave face it was too in repose, very fixed and determined. The lips, neither so full nor so delicate in their outline as the Duke's, were firmly shut, and the massive jaw seemed to lock them in with a clasp of iron. The Duke's eyes were of an uncertain colour, changing in the light, and had naturally a mournful, almost an appealing look, though they had latent fires in them. The eyes of William Brown were deep set, steady, and passionless, rather unforgiving eyes, with gleams like the flash of steel in them when he was roused to anger. But his feelings were not upon the surface. It was not easy to offend him; and in any quarrel he would be likely to have right on his side, whereas the Duke was for ever in the wrong. They would not have made bad types of success and failure. An observer would have at once perceived that the Duke of Courthope was unlucky,

and the Lieutenant fortunate : a little experience of the world would have revealed the causes which made them so. A phrenologist would have gone farther, and shown in what respects the nobleman was superior to his guest. His Grace had large perceptive faculties. He was a man eminently skilful in debate, very ready and sagacious, clear-sighted in his view of present things, but not far-seeing. The soldier's perception was defective or undeveloped ; he might be deceived and misled, having a simple faith in those around him. His mind was reflective and far-sighted, not acute.

His Grace was fond of prosing to his guest—most dukes are—as the intimacy increased between them, and his discourse very much resembled extracts from an autobiography. He was not a bright or a witty man, and his idea of conversation was to record events that had happened to himself, with his reflections upon them. His ideas had little novelty. He was indeed a Conservative, and liked to think backwards ; so that whenever a new thing was brought before him, his first impulse was to meet it by a negative. He could hardly have said the word “yes” without some qualification which neutralised it, ten times in the course of his existence since he had attained to years of discretion. Nor was the reason far to seek for this reticence. All his life long, sharp persons had been setting traps to catch his promises, and quoting his own words against him, so that he had, like many grand and powerful people, adopted a vocabulary which had no meaning at all, or he was shrewd enough to talk in his most unguarded moments upon subjects which had no connection with any matter of business by which he could be compromised.

One of his favourite topics was blood and race. He used to say that he could tell a man or woman of rank by the first inflection of their voice in speaking, and that there was something distinctive and beautifying in mere birth. He had a marked contempt for women, mentioning them as toys and playthings. They belonged, he observed, to no definite station, and beauty was their only title to consideration. One might have thought, to hear him, that he had never known what it was to love, and it seemed to William Brown, as he listened, only natural that there should be so little sympathy and affection betwixt him and his son, Lord Kinsgear, seeing that the Duke considered family ties as a troublesome, if not an ignominious restraint.

Lieutenant Brown liked this conversation amazingly. He already thought himself one of a privileged class, being received on equal terms by such good company. He was proud of his uniform, proud of his rank in the army, proud of his grand acquaintances : and if the Duke had told him that the noble idea was that the moon had been created out of cream cheese, he would have hastened to adopt it. Having succeeded so well in his profession, the boy was something of a soldier pedant, and was beginning already to look down upon the world in a way amusing enough to a philosopher.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HEIR OF COURTHOPE.

Nor long after the return of William Brown to England, Lord Punjaub and the Marquis of Kinsgear came back also ; the one having been raised to the rank of a full general, and the other to that of lieutenant-colonel, promotion always travelling by special trains for the nobility. Both of them had, however, well earned their advancement. The Marquis having risen chiefly by death vacancies, owed but little on this occasion to the accident of his birth, while Lord Punjaub had only been treated according to the usual rules of military precedence. It had been a fine thing for him at the outset of his career to be the brother and then the uncle of a duke, and many a stepping stone had been put in his way to help him over dangerous places in consequence ; his position, indeed, had given him opportunities of acquiring distinction, which are denied to meaner men. But having once attained a certain rank by these means, favour was no longer of much use to him. He was surrounded by competitors as noble and high born as himself ; and whose connections were quite as influential. Moreover, the eyes of the public were on him, and it would have been impossible to bestow honours upon him if he had not more or less deserved them. He could neither have obtained a command of importance, nor have held one after the loss of an ill-fought battle, or the commission of any signal blunder. Upon the whole, therefore, Anglo-Indian notions were very well satisfied with the rewards bestowed on the two noblemen ; and it was said and printed in many places that they had only been fairly treated when their services were handsomely and promptly acknowledged.

But the time had come when nothing which this world has to offer could be of much value to the young Marquis. His health had steadily declined since he had received that wound in the Indian battle, and at last the physicians who had attended upon him at Calcutta had reluctantly consented to his return homewards.

So Lord Kinsgear obtained leave of absence upon sick certificate, and some weeks afterwards arrived at Beaumanoir with Lord Punjaub, not being even permitted to live his natural and appointed time because he was a marquis. His title and great fortunes had always been unlucky to him. He had never enjoyed their possession, and yet he was summarily put to death because of them. Had he been a cheesemonger like his ancestor by his mother's side, who in constitution and mental endowments he most resembled, he might have been a useful and happy man ; and have attained a good old age. As it was, he had always been misplaced in the world. It cost him a persistent effort to fill the position which had been assigned him in it, and constant calls had been made upon his energies, which his nature could not answer. Few and rare had been the times when the faint strain of Wyldwyl blood had manifested itself in him ; at all others he had been lymphatic and indifferent ; and

the splendour with which he had been surrounded had only wearied him.

He was brought down in an invalid carriage to the palace where his family had kept high state for centuries, and not a footfall was suffered to be heard about the gorgeous chambers of his home, after he was carried up-stairs and laid upon the bed from which he was never to rise again in mortal form. The hand of the destroyer was quite visible upon him, and those who looked upon his livid face and wasted limbs could cherish no illusions as to his possible recovery. The light in his eyes was nearly extinct, his lips were white, and there was that tightening and glazed appearance of the skin over the upper part of his face which announces approaching dissolution. He seemed to be nearly dead already, and only rallied for a short season when he saw William Brown. He appeared to feel under some restraint in his father's presence, and though his manner was respectful and becoming to the last, he only answered the questions put to him, and voluntarily said nothing. It was as though he felt himself a being apart from that splendid and haughty race which claimed him as its representative, and considered himself an unwilling intruder upon it. He had been very happy as a boy in his mother's dower house, with his scantily furnished room and his mechanical occupations. He had never been altogether at his ease after he was removed from them.

The hopeless condition of Lord Kinsgear was a cause of terrible anxiety to the Duke of Courthope, all of whose plans were upset by his son's illness. He earnestly pressed William Brown to prolong his visit, because the Marquis only revived in his society, and would not hear of his going away.

"Don't leave me, Willie," he said faintly. "I shall not trouble you long, and you must make this your home as long as I am here, and I hope afterwards."

So an extension of the lieutenant's leave was obtained from the Horse Guards, and William Brown stopped on at Beaumanoir.

It might have been evident to any one better acquainted with the ways of the world than this young soldier of fortune, that the Duke of Courthope had far other and deeper causes for anxiety connected with his son's death, than even the sorrow which parental affection must have inspired for the loss of his only son and heir. Though all the guests but Lady Overlaw and some near relations of the Wyldwyls had departed from Beaumanoir in presence of the grief which had descended like a pall upon the great house, flies and carriages were hurrying backwards and forwards through the Park to the station, all day long at intervals, and generally they deposited a lawyer, or a lawyer's chief clerk, who would remain often for many hours closeted with his Grace, and then hurry away with sheaves of paper and parchments in blue bags. Not even the express trains which sped to London thrice a day could keep pace with the hurried rush of legal business consequent upon the expected demise of the Marquis; and messengers and telegrams were despatched hot foot

with supplementary instructions, or answers to interrogations from Lincoln's Inn.

Mr. Sharpe had now his own apartments in the palace, and had been there for days, drafting documents, which his clerks took away and brought back upon sheets of lambskin with large seals and gaudy stamps attached to them. Narrow silken ribbons bound them together. Lawyers are very neat in their instruments of torture. The Duke of Courthope would sit with haggard eyes in the great Gothic library with its carved oak sculpturing and oriel windows, while these things were doing, and pore painfully hour after hour over the papers which his solicitors sent to him.

It may have been fact or fancy, but late one evening, when the household were gone to bed, Lady Overlaw went into the library for the last volume of the latest new novel which had arrived from London: she thought she saw that splendid noble, to whom life had hitherto been one long worry and yet a festival, with his head bowed upon his hands, and moaning grievously. Before him were whole reams of foolscap fresh covered with the drafts of legal documents, and on their margins were annotations in the Duke's own hand. On either side of him were two tall candlesticks, which had been burning so long that the lights flared in their sockets and gave a gaunt unearthly aspect to the apartment as they flickered and blazed by turns. The first beams of a moon which rose late streamed in through the oriel windows, and touched the dark colouring of a portrait by Vandyck as it hung grim and silent amidst the hard carved oak around. It was the picture of the Lord Chief Justice Wyldwyl—an upright judge, who had redeemed the fortunes of Philip Wyldwyl, Earl of Allswon, in the time of Charles the First.

The beautiful lady stopped, with the silver lamp which had lighted her from her dressing-room in her hand, and looked at him. She might have stood for a picture of Mercy watching over Sorrow, and she made a hesitating step towards him, for her heart, light and frivolous as it was, had been touched by that supreme agony, in one so proud and great. But the Duke, if her fancy, overwrought by some romance, had not deceived her altogether, lifted up his head instantly at the sound of her footstep, and rising with the knightly grace which belonged to him, came towards her with a gallant smile and lofty courtesy.

"Belle Cousine!" said he. "What eyes unclosed so late! I shall have some of the park-keepers taking them for stars, and telling marvels to his neighbours of how my place is haunted by heavenly visitors. Stay," he added kindly, "let me look for your book;" and then, when he had found it, he conducted her to the door and held it open for her as she passed through, and bade her a chivalrous good-night. He was so grand a prince of manners that perhaps she loved him then, and she went onwards with footsteps which seemed to hesitate. For a moment—it was when she reached the foot of the private staircase which led to her own suite of rooms—she turned and looked back. But the massive door of the library had been gently closed when she retired beyond it, and the

lord of Beaumanoir was alone again with his anguish. He toiled on with those papers all through the night, covering every inch of blank space on them with his marginal notes, and his features looked sometimes very shrewd and keen as he did so. The morning broke dim and grey, and the air, chilled by showers, was very bleak in the lofty room, but still he worked on with knitted brows and close attention, as one who fought for his life with an invisible enemy who must be combated upon paper. If there was any lawyer who was trying then to take advantage of him, the case of that lawyer was not hopeful. Some of the acumen of Judge Wyldwyl's mind was showing itself, struggling out of the superincumbent load of idleness and pleasure which had weighed it down so long. Old men who had passed half a century in the law courts would be amazed and puzzled by that night's work; for the Duke was brought to bay, and defending himself like a stag of ten who turns upon his hunters.

At about nine o'clock he rang for his valet, bathed himself, dressed entirely afresh, and ordered coffee; then he sent to ask if Lord Kinsgear was awake, for Mr. Sharpe was with his Grace again, and had brought a parchment deed ready for signature.

The Duke showed no outward trace of his vigil, but he looked very anxious till the answer came from his son's sick-room, pressing his lips together and drawing down one side of his mouth in a way he had when he had determined to act with resolution, or, if needs must, with harshness, and to stifle his natural feelings, which were considerate and amiable to all who were immediately about his presence.

Presently the servant came back with a message from the Duke's domestic physician, saying that Lord Kinsgear was awake, but very feeble, and that Captain Brown had been sitting up all night with him.

"I had rather he hadn't," said Mr. Sharpe, coarsely, when the servant was gone. "That Brown is always with him in business hours—and out of them."

"Enough!" answered the Duke, sternly. "You want to have the thing signed, and I will take care *that is done*." He touched the deed scornfully as he spoke, and Mr. Sharpe, bully as he was, perceived that he had struck some chord with a sharp note, and that it would not be safe to touch it again.

"It *must* be done, I suppose, Sharpe?" asked the Duke, after a pause.

"It *must*," answered the lawyer, "certainly, your Grace."

"Nothing from me or Lord George will do, instead of disturbing the dying boy in his last moments with this trumpery? It is a ghastly practice yours, to hunt a man out of the world with a pack of bonds and assignments after him."

"Nothing else will do, your Grace," answered Mr. Sharpe, decisively, "because his lordship is his mother's heir, and the latest securities touched her property."

"Well then, sir, follow me," said the Duke, coldly, and he led the way with an unflinching step to the chamber where the dying Marquis lay.

CHAPTER V.

AMABEL WYLDWYL.

WHEN the Duke of Courthope and Mr. Sharpe entered the sick-room of Lord Kinsgear, they found him talking feebly to William Brown, who was seated by his bed-side. The young men were going over their Indian campaign again, as they used to do when together, and recalling many a stirring scene of battle and of bivouac. There was even a faint flush upon the faded cheek of the Marquis, which half resembled a sign of returning health, and perhaps, so strong is life before grief has sapped its sources, he might have then revived had he been left at rest. His native air had done something for him, and the companionship of his comrade seemed to have given him new strength, or, perhaps, a new interest in existence. William Brown, who had a creative mind, was showing the Marquis the model of a new pontoon bridge upon which he had been engaged for some time past, and had brought to great perfection; for he was always thinking of his profession, and devising something which might be useful in it, having reflected that behind every difficulty there lurks an invention. He had, therefore, put together, upon a new system, a number of flat-bottomed air-boats, very strong, very portable, and very easily managed. The Marquis, who was fond of mechanics, and understood all things relating to them extremely well, had dropped off to sleep on the previous night with his mind pleasantly occupied about this pontoon bridge, and had slept soundly, so he woke refreshed. The two officers were busy with their plan for facilitating the transport of troops across rivers. The Marquis sat propped up by pillows, and his wan hands held the soldierly toy, pointing out where it was defective and might be strengthened, or made to fold into a smaller compass.

He closed his eyes wearily when the Duke entered, and the transitory look of restored vigour faded out of his face. His head fell back upon the pillows, though a minute before it had been bent eagerly forward, and a petulant expression flitted over his countenance.

"What do they want of me now, Willie?" he muttered. "I signed something yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that. When will it be all over? I wish we were back in India under canvas again. It was so pleasant."

"It will all come right," said young Brown. "You are ten times better to-day, you know. There's the Duke speaking to you. Come, cheer up."

Meantime, while the young men exchanged these words, his Grace had entered the room, and stood in the place of William Brown, who had risen respectfully to make way for him. He was too fine a gentleman, however, to disturb his guest without an apology, and courteously laid his hand for an instant on the lieutenant's arm, as though he desired to

detain him, and took his place at last only with a deprecatory bow and polished word. "I beg," said the Duke, kindly, "that you will not move, Captain—that is, unless you prefer the society of Lady Overlaw to that of the lawyers. You will find her in the breakfast-room, a little jealous of your deserting her levee so often." Then, and not till then, the Duke sat down in the chair which his guest had occupied, and William Brown discreetly retired, feeling, but neither seeing nor hearing, that he was in the way.

The room was nearly full when he left it. Not only the Duke and the lawyer were there, but Mr. Senior, the steward of the household, and Tripwell, the head footman, as well as one of Mr. Sharpe's clerks who had been sent for to attest the deed which the dying man was required to sign that day. They were in all five persons, and their presence seemed to overpower the Marquis, as though their robust vitality oppressed and was too much for him.

Leaving them there, Mr. Brown took his way through stately corridors and storied picture-galleries, away to the breakfast-room, which was a delicious apartment surrounded by conservatories, and which opened on to a flower-garden with a view of the lake. It had a southern aspect, and was so sheltered that it was possible to breakfast there with the windows open even in the finer winter days. It was quite at the farther end of the house, and was one of those quiet, pretty dwelling-rooms which are sometimes found even in palaces, as a refuge from splendour.

Presently William Brown heard the voices of Lady Overlaw and Mr. Heriot, who had just arrived on business at the palace by the morning mail train.

"Lord George, that is to say, Lord Punjaub, and his daughter, are expected to-day," Lady Overlaw was saying, in reply to a question from her solicitor; "for the rest, we have only my aunt, Lady Clanmore, whom you know; a few people who are always here, and—oh yes—there is a Mr. Brown, who I understand was a charity boy, and is now a sort of companion, or man-governess, to the Marquis; very stupid, and talks to me about 'field telegraphs,' I think. But, dear me, I declare there he is, coming through the conservatory."

"How do you do, Captain? See, I have kept some peaches for you"—and her ladyship was all smiles and gracious gossip directly.

The young fellow did not sulk, though he could not help hearing what had been said of him; and she knew that he knew it, but was no more embarrassed than great ladies usually are when they have said or done something rude. Moreover, the lieutenant had the instincts of a gentleman, and behaved well under punishment; but he felt it keenly, and therefore it did him good, for it cured him of consequentiousness for the rest of his life, and taught him that there was upon earth something which commanded more universal admiration than a lieutenant's commission; that it would not quite do to show himself a military pedant before ladies, unless he expected to be laughed at; and that fine society

is not given to overestimating those who suddenly obtain access to it; and that it finds out about them rather more than they know themselves, whatever the specious nothings of good manners might indicate to the contrary notwithstanding.

Still the young man had received a severe, though a wholesome lesson, and he smarted under it. He felt almost ashamed to go back to his friend's sick room, lest he should be marked by the servants as a toady and a sycophant who gave his companionship for wages and succulent food. He wandered through the great rooms when he had quitted Lady Overlaw and Mr. Heriot after breakfast, becoming every moment more dejected. He no longer liked to order a horse for a ride in the park, or to send for one of the keepers and a couple of dogs, as he would have done yesterday; he who was looked upon as a charity-boy, and an upper servant. He was degraded in his own esteem; he felt himself to be an interloper and an intruder, who had no right to be among all that marble and carved oak, and gilding, and suits of armour, and pictures, every one of which was probably worth more than he could ever expect to win;—a poor soldier of fortune raised from the ranks to a place where he was only despised by those born to fill it. He had better, he thought bitterly, have remained a private, or at most a non-commissioned officer, and been content to associate with his equals, since there were barriers to intercourse with gentlefolks which no exertions or merits of his own, if he had merits, could surmount; and very likely he had no merits; no, it was quite certain that he had none. Had not Lady Overlaw sneered at him for being stupid? She was a great lady, and must have judged him better than he judged himself. He was a fool, an idiot,—yes, a pretentious donkey—that was the best description of him. He would go back to barracks again. Colonel Oakes liked him, and if he resigned his post as aide-de-camp to Lord Punjaub, as he certainly would, some day he might be made adjutant of his regiment, and then he would have enough to do; and, meanwhile, he could forget the baseness of his origin in the call of the bugles to stable-duty. He was perhaps good enough to associate with a horse, if not with dukes and marquises and fine ladies.

He had wandered into the library while in this contented frame of mind, and looked listlessly out of window, thinking of how he should take leave of the Duke that day. The weather was gusty and sad; great lead-coloured clouds rolled up heavily from the west, and now and then a shower seemed to sweep scornfully over the landscape. A travelling-carriage-and-four, piled high with imperials, came galloping up the avenue, arriving from the station, which was a good way off, owing to the great extent of the park, which the late Duke would not allow to be cut up when the railway was making, so that he and his guests were obliged to use post-horses; and the Courthope Arms at Revel was one of the few posting-inns still in existence. Doubtless the carriage contained some more of the relatives or dependants of the noble family whose heir was

dying. He had come from the station in a fly; and the lowest menials of the place must have made a mock at him, he fancied now.

He was still torturing himself, and might have imagined that he had committed the unpardonable sin, or that he was a leper before he had done, so deeply had Lady Overlaw's contempt stung him; but while he was honestly trying to hurt his feelings a little more, the library door was suddenly flung open, and a radiant vision, all joy and laughter, came bounding up to him on feet of air, looked archly at him for a moment, then dropped a demure curtsy, and threw her arms round his neck and kissed him.

"Thank you for getting well, Cousin Kingsgear. I am so happy; and it is so nice. Come out into the garden with me. I want to see my golden pheasants again," said this young person.

"Hallo, Brown," cried the deep voice of Lord Punjaub, who now entered the room; "I told you I would show you my daughter when I could get her back from Ireland. Missy, Lieutenant Brown, one of the finest fellows in the army, and a member of my family."

The General spoke in Indian fashion of his aide-de-camp, but Lieutenant Brown looked as if he had just dropped from the clouds, and was wonder-stricken at what had happened to him; while Miss Wyldwyl had disappeared, and was not seen again till dinner-time, when she was so entirely absorbed in a conversation with the Dowager Marchioness of Newcomen, that she did not even see Mr. Brown, which was at least extraordinary after her conduct in the library; and the General scolded her for being "uncivil to one of the finest young fellows in the service, you minx."

"I hate fine young fellows, Pa," answered the young lady, with much spirit. "They are always in the way when they are not wanted. They ought to be put to death."

Somehow or other it happened that after this remarkable incident in his biography, Lieutenant Brown had no desire to leave Beaumanoir that day, or for some time afterwards. Had he not his duties as aide-de-camp to Lord Punjaub to attend to? He was on leave of absence; but what of that? The General was staying in the same house with him, and the first duty of a soldier was obedience. The General had always plenty of employment for him, for his lordship was accustomed to be surrounded by young men who were ready to gallop forty miles before breakfast at his nod, and liked it. He could not do without them, and it was, "Here, Brown, just step up to the village, will you, and get some sweetmeats for that girl of mine;" or, "Brown, that tyrant of ours wants a new sash from Howell and James's. Bring it down with you this afternoon." Indeed it appeared as if the young lady herself insisted that these commissions should be executed by the handsome young aide-de-camp, evincing upon every occasion a passionate eagerness to get him out of the way; yet never failing to ask when he would come back again. But she would not speak to him or look at him, or even be introduced to him,

saying, pertly, that she knew a great deal too much about him as it was ; and the General, who had hitherto found her always the charm and darling of his " family," as they call aides-de-camp in India, was surprised and a little hurt at her capricious behaviour towards his favourite. " He'll get the Victoria Cross too, some day, Miny ; think of that. Ho ! ho ! think of that," remonstrated the old soldier, who had a mighty idea of military distinctions, as it was right and becoming that he should have. But nothing would move Miss Amabel Wyldwyl from her entrenchments, and when her father pleaded very hard with her for young Brown, by-and-bye she got into a way of putting one of her small hands before his mouth, and pretending to stop her ears with the other. Yet, when he said no more, it was she who began to talk of the soldier.

CHAPTER VI.

WOOING.

AMABEL WYLDWYL had been brought up in England, and was now just eighteen years old. She was very beautiful, very much accustomed to have her own way in everything, and had been spoiled all her life. She had been the darling of the Dowager Marchioness of Newcomen, whose children were all grown up and had left her, so that she was glad of that bright young presence in her lonely dower house. She resided for the greater part of the year at a fine picturesque castle on the coast of Ireland, but she came to London occasionally, and was not unknown to the world of fashion and politics ; being herself by birth one of the ancient family of the Townshends of Tynedale. Miss Wyldwyl had lived with this excellent lady much as the beauty of a fairy tale lives with her godmother ; and there had been always the best possible understanding between them. Amabel had learned to ride with great courage and skill, for the Tynedales had ever been leaders of the turf. She had also become an accomplished musician, for the Townshends were hereditary patrons of art. She could draw and paint too, with no common cunning, and the Dowager having a very sound taste for books, because she had had too much experience of life to tolerate a false representation of it, Miss Amabel was familiar with a class of authors who do not often come under the notice of young ladies. She was indeed that most precious product of nature and of education, a beautiful girl, who had many of the best qualities, and much of the intellect, of an honest man. It did not prevent her from being graceful and womanly ; it did not save her from being extremely capricious. But her caprices were all harmless and innocent. They came merely of youth and high spirits ; there was never anything cruel or calculating in them, and when her feelings were touched she was as docile as a child. If she plagued her father, it was because she knew that he liked to be plagued by her, and teased her into reprisals. If she had been wayward and aggressive towards Lieutenant Brown, it

was because their first introduction to each other had been of an unusual character, and the girl had lain awake of nights crying and laughing and hiding her blushing head in her pillow dozens of times when she remembered it. She thought that she could never bear to see Mr. Brown, still less to speak to him any more; and then she found herself watching for him, and wondering about him, talking of him, dreaming of him, and she grew angry with herself.

It was not till she learned how brave and good he was, how simple-hearted and unassuming, that she began to forgive herself, and then she resolutely determined to look upon him as a brother. He was her father's aide-de-camp, and it was the custom in India for Generals to consider their aides-de-camp as members of their family. There could be no harm in her following so time honoured a practice; and so the maiden lulled her troubled heart to rest, and sometimes slept the tranquil sleep of self-approval. Mr. Brown's manners were so reserved, that it was clear he must have forgotten how forward she had been in having kissed him by mistake for her cousin; perhaps he had not noticed what had happened; or, if he must have noticed it, he must have known that it was all a dreadful, shocking, tragical event for her. These later considerations followed her into her doze and brought her back to broad wakefulness again; and once more she hid her pretty head in her pillow and felt so angry, oh, so angry, and so ashamed, that she could have died, if something had not whispered to her that it might be sweet to live; and so, when she had cried a little, and laughed a short reluctant laugh, followed by a plaintive whine, she lost consciousness, and awoke next morning while all the birds of the garden were singing their matins, or perhaps chirping out to each other in merry couplets that she had been naughty, and her slumbers were broken in consequence.

It was worse still in the morning. She was afraid for days and days to go downstairs to breakfast for fear of meeting Mr. Brown; and the Dowager was much edified to see Miss Amabel come demurely into her dressing-room, to share her dry toast, when there were such very nice things prepared for her elsewhere, and the girl had a fine appetite.

She got a little more self-assurance after breakfast, for even dry toast, accompanied by hot coffee and boiled cream, such as the Dowager's maid combined, has invigorating qualities. "Why," she then argued with herself, "should she torment herself about a stupid person—well, perhaps he was not stupid, it was only Lady Overlaw who said he was stupid, and Lady Overlaw never liked any one who did not pay her compliments; but why should she torment herself about a *person* who could never be anything to her?" Why, indeed? said some internal voice, which seemed to mock her slyly; and all the morning as she walked with the Dowager and her poodle, or as she sat with her pencils and Bristol boards before her, sketching under the beech trees, she thought of William Brown, till she drew caricatures of him in a grotesque and petulant despair at being quite unable to get him out of her head for a moment, and then

she drew knights and paladins and troubadours, who one and all resembled him. Even King Arthur, portrayed by her pencil, sat his fabled steed like William Brown; and had the same steadfast look in his royal eyes as when last she saw the young soldier, riding away from Beaumanoir to do some idle errand for her, leaving all the palace and the park behind him uninhabited, and without the soul which made them stately and fair.

Yet still, now pleaded graver conscience, what if he were a hero and a gallant gentleman, as she owned he was, what could he be to her? A friend whom she could never see—nothing more. She might follow him in her imagination, indeed, where brave men win their bright renown; she might sometimes pray for him when he was in sorrow or in danger; and when they were old, old people who had done with life, she might meet him again with eyes which would not burn and ache and weep by turns, as hers did now.

Why had they talked of him to her so much and so often? Why had she seen for herself how fearless and gentle he was? Why was his name for ever on her father's honest lips, but another word for valour and for goodness? Every one liked him, from the under-game-keeper, whom she had heard praise his shooting to her own groom, up to Dean Mowledy, who treated him as if he were his own son, and whose language took more than its usual grave sweetness when he spoke to the young soldier. Why had they all joined together to steal her heart away from her, when perhaps she might have kept it fancy-free, or lured it back again from its first tremulous flight? They all knew that she had been engaged almost from her cradle to the Marquis of Kingsgear, and that they were betrothed as man and wife. If he were dying, as the physicians said, she would remain a widow for his sake, as a noble lady should do. But only a few hours ago, the Marchioness of Newcomen, her last refuge from persecution, had put up her glasses to look at him, when he had offered her ladyship some ordinary token of respect, and had remarked that he was the handsomest and best-bred man she had ever seen; "except the late Duke of Courthope, my darling, who, by the way, he resembles in a manner which is quite astonishing," added the Dowager; and moreover the likeness which the lieutenant bore to the Wyldwyl family was generally noticed. It was that which had deceived Miss Amabel when she first saw him, and had she ventured to admit any excuse to herself, it lay there quite ready for her acceptance. He was but a taller and finer resemblance of her affianced husband, and as she had not seen her betrothed for three years, she had been the more easily misled.

The girl had no idea of breaking her engagement, if her cousin could have lived to claim it. She had been brought up to look upon Lord Kingsgear as her husband, and she did so. The ties of relationship are very strong among the Anglo-Indians; and her father always wrote to her and spoke to her as if a duty were imposed upon her from which she could in nowise depart. She was aware also that there was

a mystery in her family, though she did not know its precise nature, and that many things would be set right when she married the Marquis. She had tranquilly accepted her lot in life also, without question and without repugnance hitherto, for the Marquis was very kind and pleasant, though so silent, and sometimes, as she thought, a little awkward. They had not seen much of each other; but whenever they had passed a few months together she had liked him, and taken possession of him, in her girlish way, as something which was to belong to her by-and-by. If now the doctors barely gave him another week to live, that did not seem to her to loosen the bond between them. On the contrary, she felt that she should love him better now, and mourn for him worthily.

Meantime William Brown rode with her and her father daily; and Amabel became too sad to avoid him, as she had hitherto done. She no longer spoke of him with pertness or mockery, and the conversation, as they wound slowly through meadows and woodlands in the autumn afternoons, was very pensive. They could hardly be gay while the young lord was dying; and even the General's bluff good humour was not proof against the melancholy circumstances which surrounded them. The good old man was grieved to see the hope of his race smitten down so early; but the feeling scarcely amounted to a personal sorrow. His rough soldierly nature had little sympathy with the taciturn Marquis and his sedentary pursuits. They had never understood each other, and although they had preserved the outward forms of kinsmanship when they met, they had met but seldom. The General's house had always been open to the young man, but he had rarely gone there; and if they had a cold mutual respect for each other, there was no affection between them. Young Brown was far more to his mind. The lieutenant was silent and reserved too, and studious, which Lord George had never been; but he could back a horse and take a joke, and sit steadily behind a bottle as long as any youngster he had ever known. His lordship was glad to get out with him from the stifling air and hushed whispers of Beaumanoir, and generally prolonged his ride, upon some pretext or other, from two o'clock, when lunch was over, till nearly six, when it was time to dress for dinner.

They wandered alone through the home park, where the deer browsed, and the timid hare flitted across their path, and the partridges called to each other from their cover, and so on out into the open country, amidst the lovely English landscape, with its village-church steeples and old manor-houses half hidden in ancient oaks and ivy. The General rode between them, with one of the young people on either side of him; and both of them would have thought it treason to say a word which he could not hear or comprehend, and yet, unconsciously to themselves, no accent passed their lips but had some hidden meaning.

They conversed chiefly about India; and the young soldier said that when the General's present command expired he should return thither, having neither interest nor desire for a career in England.

Miss Amabel answered that he would do well, though her cheek paled slightly as she spoke, and her horse showed signs of uneasiness.

Then the General asked what he should do when they had both gone away from him, and seemed to class them together as though they had been his son and daughter. He thought that Lord Kinsgear might still recover, and that then she would be soon lost to him.

Miss Amabel said that she would never leave him now; and young Brown added that he should never go while the General, or any one near or dear to him, desired his presence. The young lady rejoined that England must be dull and spiritless to one who had seen so much of camps; and the soldier replied that he had never found it so. It was not dull, he deemed, but sorrowful—a place where vain, ambitious, hopeless fancies grew. It was only for the rich and high-born to aspire to live there. It was an abode for happiness, not for disappointment.

"Disappointment, Brown!" observed the General, bluntly. "Pray, how the deuce can you be disappointed?"

"Papa," replied Miss Amabel, with a woman's ready tact, "you speak as if there was nothing in life beyond the army regulations and the rules of the service."

"Stuff, Missy!" retorted Lord Punjaub. "A young fellow has no right to be discontented who has got a captain's commission in prospect, and is well and strong. He may be anything he likes, do anything he likes, and have half the girls in the kingdom breaking their hearts for him, if he likes. Look at me. Egad, I might have married a dowager bishoress and a lovely west-country heiress at the same time, if I had not preferred your mother. They both set their caps at my red coat."

"Captain Brown will choose a lovely west-country heiress, I suppose?" said Miss Wyldwyl, dryly; and she appeared to have just caught a slight cough. Captain Brown winced as the sharp little shaft struck him, and it was some time before he found words to answer that he should never marry.

"Quite right, quite right," said the General, putting spurs to his powerful thoroughbred, and pounding along the road at a thundering trot, while the light horse on either side of him broke into a canter. "It won't do to marry till you become a field officer, and can get good quarters for your wife, and buy her a smart turban now and then."

"Turban, papa!" exclaimed Miss Amabel, horror-stricken, yet laughing, as she breasted a south wind which brought back the colour to her cheeks, at a hand-gallop. "Who upon earth wears a turban?"

"Everybody did in my time, Missy. A turban made of an Indian shawl, with a bird-of-paradise feather in it: most becoming, I assure you," replied the General, with perfect gravity, his notions of the fashion being dated about forty years before this present writing.

"If Captain Brown makes his wife wear a turban, papa, she will never speak to him again," observed Miss Amabel, decisively.

"Why, you small firefly," returned her father, "do you mean to command Brown's wife as well as himself?"

"Oh, dear, no, papa; I am sure I shall never see the lady," said Miss Amabel, as they checked their horses after a burst over the turf.

"What next? Are you going to shut your doors upon Brown when he gets married, as all the fine ladies did upon your mother and me, because we had not got ten thousand a year? Ho! ho! ho! If you do, I hope he will laugh at you, as we did at them," remarked Lord Punjaub.

"I shall never put Miss Wyldwyl's hospitality to the test for a wife, my lord," said young Brown. "It is enough honour if she will condescend to receive me, when next I return home. I shall live and die a bachelor."

"You will do as other young fellows have done before you," observed the General, with rough good humour. "You will become the slave of the first pretty girl who thinks you worth catching."

"A fish cannot be caught twice, my lord, if he is once safely netted," said Mr. Brown.

"Oh, that's the way the cat jumps!" exclaimed the General, slyly. "A dead man cannot be killed over again."

"Of course, if Captain Brown is engaged, the case is altogether different," observed the young lady, adjusting a button of her glove.

"Who is it, Brown?" inquired the General, maliciously. "One of the Dashwood girls, or Miss Swan? I do not think that you visited anywhere else in Calcutta, except at the house of that cantankerous old Scotchman, who looked as if he had never seen a petticoat."

"You forget, my lord, that Miss Swan has married Major Gosling—and the two Miss Dashwoods—well, I had better, perhaps, say nothing more about them."

"Garrison hacks, eh? Ah, I daresay you are right. You youngsters are always hard upon girls who have been long in the market. They are good girls, too, Brown. They were the belles of the room at a ball I gave; let me see, when was it? In 1840, I think."

"They must be very interesting young ladies indeed, papa," said Miss Wyldwyl.

"Very!" returned the General, seriously. "One of them talked to me about botany, I think it was, or astronomy, I forget which, the last time I saw her at Government House. Brother a very good fellow too; made a Member of Council just before I left Calcutta. But who the deuce is your flame, Brown, if you have not caught fire from the Dashwoods? Somebody down Dronington way, eh? Famous places for pretty girls those Oxfordshire villages round Dronington and Wakefield-in-the-Marsh."

"It is some one whom I am never likely to see again after I have left England, and therefore I do not presume to pronounce her name," said young Brown, despondingly.

"That is a bad business," remarked the General, with twinkling eyes, as though he saw some humour in all love-affairs. "But faint heart never won fair lady. Have you asked her?"

"I might as well have asked for the moon," said young Brown; "and it would not be fair to laugh at me, because I could not get for the asking."

"Yes, it would," observed the General, curtly. "You may have anything worth winning in this world, if you try for it, and go on the hunt with a bold heart and a clear conscience. If the girl's got a father, send him to me, and I will say a word for you in the right way. You must win the lady's good graces yourself. I cannot help you there. If she has got a mother, by George, Missy will ask the dowager to help you, won't you, my girl? I have seen this young dog under fire," observed the General, turning to his daughter, "and now he tells me he is afraid because he is love-sick."

Lord Punjaub struck his hand with bluff affection on his aide-de-camp's shoulder as he spoke: "I won't stand by and see your life's happiness marred if I can help it," he resumed; "and if you are very hard hit by a pair of bright eyes, we must win them together. It will not be the first time we have ridden out to a victory."

George Wyldwyl had always taken pleasure in the happiness of those around him, and had a ready-made theory of his own, that his life would be worth little if it could not contribute to the advancement and the good of others. He was a candid old man who had seen the world, and he had no doubt that if there was any obstacle to the love-making of a handsome youngster, money was more likely to be the thing really in the way than any other. Then he thought of his Indian strong box, and how little anything that could be wanted in the present instance would diminish it.

"My lord," said the young man, "I am quite overcome by your goodness. You cannot help me. I think I am in love with a dream." He laughed and turned away his head; but for the first time since he had become a man, there were tears in his eyes.

"How you do tease everybody, papa!" whispered Miss Amabel, shaking her little forefinger, and she stooped over her saddle bow, till her lips just touched Lord Punjaub's white moustache.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HEIR'S DEATH.

THE Marquis of Kinsgear grew rapidly worse. The physicians now said that his malady was pulmonary disease. There is always a name for everything, but all that they knew was that his brief life was drawing fast to a close. Many learned things are always said about the death of a Marquis, and doctors dispute over it.

Reputations are made and lost, as the medical men who attend upon him may be popular in their profession, or otherwise—the honour remaining with him who can state his case the best in print, though print has but

little to do with the healing art. Perhaps there was truth in what they said, that the wounds which he received in the Indian battle should have been cured, or should have killed him long before. But nature is a poor student of logic, and they had never healed satisfactorily, or grown much worse. They were always breaking out afresh, as though he had some radical vice of constitution. There may have been a poison, too, which works slowly, upon the Indian's spear, or he may have received some internal injury which none could detect or guess at. When a pin's point is sufficient to produce death, it is but waste of time to wonder that the immediate cause of it cannot always be detected with complete accuracy. This much was clear, and no more—the Marquis of Kinsgear was dying. He had a cruel cough—he was wasted to a shadow—he could not eat or drink, or sleep, as the healthy do—his eyes lacked lustre, when they were not all aflame—his cheeks were livid, when they had not a hectic flush upon them. He was like a fire of straw, which flares when the wind smites upon it, then falls into an unsubstantial heap of ashes.

So many hopes were centred in him, it seemed hard that he should pass away from the world so early, leaving no memorial to show that he had been here. There is a verse in the hundred-and-ninth psalm—it is the twelfth verse, and it probably explains why the young man died, in the dawn and promise of his career: but no one thought of that at Beaumanoir. They only marvelled, and some wept, because he drew to his end as a post that hastened by, or, as when an arrow is shot at a mark, it parts the air, which immediately comes together again, so that none can know where it went through.

Ever since the day of his birth numbers of grasping people had speculated upon what they might gain by him; and ambitious people had planned how he should further their interests, or those of their children, when he grew up; and plots and combinations without end were making in which he played some part involuntarily.

The next heir of the Courthopes was Lord Punjaub, and he was old; after him there was nobody, and the two historic dukedoms, which had now been united for three generations, would become extinct. Some of the Scotch peerages in the family descended in the female line; and so, if the last two Dukes of Courthope both died without issue, Miss Wyldwyl might claim to be Countess of Winguid in her own right, and would succeed to those great estates in the North now forming the chief property which maintained the hereditary splendour of the dukedoms, for the English estates were overhoused and unproductive. It cost more to keep them up than their net rental; and although the present Duke had made enormous purchases in land since he succeeded to the title, not an acre which he nominally possessed was unencumbered, and he had mortgaged every inch of ground he acquired on the day he bought it, or he could not have found the money to feed his passion for adding field to field. Title-deeds and mortgage-deeds had both changed hands at the same time. Every estate which he had bought would be sent to the hammer

when the Marquis died, and his Grace would have to live henceforth abroad, a ruined man, with no means of existence but what could be saved out of his son's life assurances. So Mr. Mortmain had told him plainly : the splendid noble now stood face to face with poverty, and there were six executions for debt in his palace. The bailiffs were waiting to seize his very furniture and the bed upon which his son was dying, under bills of sale for seventy thousand pounds, and collateral heirs in all parts of the kingdom were starting up, and rushing to the Court of Chancery with moth-eaten wills and testaments, to show that some of it might, or could, or would, or should belong to them.

Moreover, all the money-lenders were in arms. If the Scotch estates were to descend to Miss Wyldwyl, they would come to her without a charge upon them ; and all the securities based upon their rental, which had been given by the present Duke and his son, in virtue of their life-interest, would be waste paper.

Then the old stories came up again, and the newspapers teemed with advertisements for poor Madge, who was dead and gone ; or for some proof of the late Duke of Courthope's alleged marriage with a Scotch lady, whereby the succession to the vast estates of Winguid might be changed ; and lawyers were ferreting out the records of every village and town in Scotland, to find what they sought, working as actively and stealthily, in silence and darkness, as ferrets or moles. Even their advertisements were discreet and lawyer-like, for it would not do to put Mr. Mortmain, the family solicitor of Lord Punjaub, upon his guard on the one hand, and upon the other it was inexpedient to say too much at once. What the money-lenders wanted, was to discover a needy heir, whose case might present an aspect formidable enough to serve their turn, and then to make their own terms, or to effect a compromise in which everybody's interests should be sacrificed but their own. The unsecured debts amounted to about four hundred thousand pounds, as far as the real state of the Duke's affairs could be known, and the money-lenders might well make a desperate effort to save themselves from such a loss as that.

In this fierce conflict of interests there was little time for the home affections to make themselves heard, had they been better known at Beaumanoir. But the Duke had always looked upon his son rather as a part of his grandeur than of his heart, and there were only two persons who mourned for him. Miss Wyldwyl did all which a young lady could do under such circumstances ; it was but little, for she was necessarily excluded from the sick-room. Young Brown was constant in his attentions, and sat up night after night by the side of his comrade and brother officer, taking only brief intervals of rest when the Duke of Courthope came to replace him ; and the intricate web of business which the lawyers continued to spin round the dying man required the latest remnants of his strength to unravel it.

Although there was little love in the great house among the young

heir's kindred and connections, the servants liked him, for he had never been rude or uncivil to them, and had wanted little waiting on while he could wait upon himself. So the under-housemaids might be seen crying on the stairs while the under-footmen comforted them. Without too, among the public, and wherever the honest heart of England could be heard beating, there was sympathy for the young soldier lord, who was heir to such illustrious fortunes, and would never own them. Thousands of good and gentle people read the daily bulletins which were issued of his state with emotion, and remembered how a few short months before his name had been mentioned in gazettes and newspapers; and they said with patriotic pride that the highest of their nobles still knew how to die for their country. Royalty also telegraphed daily for news of him, and cards and letters of inquiry poured in by hundreds every hour both at Whitehall and Beaumanoir. Simple people living in country towns and remote hamlets sent their family recipes and remedies, hoping that they might do something to ease the young lord's sufferings, or by heaven's blessing to prolong his days. For we are not an evil or an unfeeling people.

Then occurred one of those passages of low comedy which will intrude into the saddest drama, though some say that Shakspeare would have better represented life had he left out the part of the gravedigger from Hamlet. Mr. Sharpe, in abject fear for his securities and bills and bonds, brought down a quack doctor who had faith in tar-water, and came with a quart bottle of it in a gig. They were obstreperous and argumentative; they would not go away, till William Brown, hearing a scuffle outside the door of the chamber where his friend had just fallen into a fitful slumber, came forth and forbade their entrance.

It was nearly all over then. When the Marquis awoke after his last conscious sleep, he appeared calmer than he had done for some days, and spoke hopefully of his recovery.

"Do you remember, Willie"—he said, as the two young men talked together over their campaign once more—"Do you remember the evening I found you reading under my tent, when I came in from dining with General Violet?"

"Yes, well," replied young Brown; "I was reading Macaulay's account of the battle of Killiecrankie. You asked me, 'How goes the day?' I answered, 'Well for King James,' which you know is in the book," observed the lieutenant gravely. "Is that right?"

"Quite right, Willie; and I answered, 'Then it matters the less for me.' I wonder why I should think of it all so clearly now? Yes. It matters the less for me."

Suddenly the Marquis started after he had spoken, and was seized with a fit of coughing followed by a slight convulsion. William Brown supported his comrade's head upon his breast, and held him there till the shock seemed over.

"I am better now," the young lord murmured faintly, and a peculiar

light passed over his face. He sunk gently backwards upon his pillow, sighed very softly once, and so he died.

"His Grace has sent to ask if the Marquis is awake?" said the groom of the chambers, opening the door gently and looking in.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOLDIER AND THE LADY.

THEY were seated together on the banks of the lake, both in deep mourning; and he had come to say good-by to her, yet could not find the words to do so fittingly. It was full a year after the Marquis's death, yet the great house reared its stately fabric as haughtily as ever amidst the ancestral woods of the Wyldwyls, and all was outwardly much as it had been. Lord Punjaub, who had an honest sense of the becoming, had paid off the most pressing claims on the family property, saying simply that he could not wear a tarnished name; so the men in possession had been paid out, and the collateral heirs who trembled for the old plate and pictures, had been unable to advertise their high birth and claims by law-suits, which was a sad thing for the Inns of Court, and several rising young barristers had put down their broughams when it was known in the clubs that the Duke of Courthope's affairs were settled.

Settled?—well, perhaps Mr. Sharpe could have told a different story. No man likes to tell all his liabilities, and the Duke had only mentioned those which immediately disquieted him, and something fresh was always turning up. Still the outward dignity of the ducal house was preserved, and the gentlemen of the county were assembled there as usual that year to shoot the covers of time-honoured Beaumanoir.

Captain Brown dropped pebbles absently into the lake and watched the cygnets sailing over its placid surface. Miss Wyldwyl was sketching; and the Dowager Marchioness of Newcomen was taking her usual airing in a bath-chair near them, being pushed slowly from behind by a black servant in livery. Her poodle barked beside her, and now and then she watched the soldier and the lady through her keen eyes furtively, knowing or suspecting more of them than they knew or dreamed of themselves.

It was Miss Wyldwyl who first broke silence. "Why should you go back to India?" she said gently. "The Duke tells me that you have been offered employment at home, and surely you have done enough for fame?" They had become almost as intimate as brother and sister now, having lived daily and every day together in the same house.

"I go," he answered, "because I am restless, and discontented, unworthy of my good fortune and kind friends, dissatisfied most of all with myself."

"And why?" she asked; "why can you not stay with us? My father has urged you so often to remain with him; and I," she added somewhat mournfully, "am I such a dull companion for you both?"

"My place will be soon filled up," replied the soldier with a sad smile, "and I shall leave no regrets which will not be forgotten in a week, though I shall take with me memories which will endure as long as I."

"What memories?" she said; "since you have no ties to England strong enough to detain you."

"It would be truer to say that I shall carry my chains with me, because they are fastened to no other heart but my own," he answered.

"You do injustice to your friends," returned Miss Wyldwyl. "My father said but yesterday that he had never known the Duke speak so warmly of any one, and you know his own feelings towards you. We have all lived together under one roof so long, that it will be a hard parting for him, for all of us."

"Yet it is better I should go, Miss Wyldwyl," replied the soldier dejectedly. "I told you long ago that I was in love with a dream. I think it is the dream of your goodness. And so farewell. I was not a charity boy, as they say here," he added with a blush, "but I was a peasant born and bred, a mere soldier of fortune, who has been raised above his sphere, and looked upwards till he grew giddy."

She did not answer him, but still he lingered, though he had said good-bye, and bade God be with her now.

"Can you ever forgive me?" he resumed. "I can never pardon myself. But I could no more resist your loveliness than I could have withstood the powers of heaven. Think of me sometimes as of one who would willingly have died for you; who dared not ask to live; and who had nothing, not even hope."

He turned with a sombre grace to leave her, but she had risen and stood before him in all the radiance of her youthful beauty.

"Is not my heart enough for you?" she said, and placed her hand in his. Then her head drooped upon his shoulder, and she hid her face.

An hour afterwards Miss Wyldwyl's arms were round her father's neck, and she told him of her happiness; and asked the General's blessing on her.

"You have chosen me one of the finest fellows in the army for a son-in-law. Mind you don't spoil him," said Lord Punjaub to her fondly.

And that night it was told at dinner, that Captain Brown, a person whom nobody knew, had carried off the greatest heiress in England, so that everybody must know him now.

CHAPTER IX.

A DISCOVERY.

WHEN many persons had remarked the extraordinary likeness which existed between Captain Brown and the Courthope family, and it became the common talk of the palace, the Duke at last had observed it also; and it had

rendered him pensive. He was old and childless now: as far as he knew, he had few interests in life, and he began to feel a kind of lazy curiosity in this Indian soldier of fortune, who was so like himself. He set himself to remember if there was any event in his past career which could account for the astonishing resemblance between them, and he could recollect nothing. His Grace interrogated Captain Brown in his own shrewd way, apparently so careless and polite, yet so searching, but he could only find out that he was born at Wakefield-in-the-Marsh, on the borders of Oxfordshire; a fact which threw no light upon the subject. The Duke had lived a great deal in that neighbourhood when he was a young man at the University, and had afterwards hunted the country.

Then he set inquiries on foot, but conducted them in a discreet way, mostly through Dean Mowledy and the local gentry, so that he obtained no precise information. The Dean was especially reserved for reasons of his own, and the Oxfordshire squires could only say that young Brown was the son of an innkeeper, who had enlisted and done well in the army, as the Duke knew, and that his family had died in the wreck of the *Royal Charter* as they were about to emigrate, which circumstance touched upon a fact he did not care to remember, having resolutely forgotten some proceedings which had been taken at that time against a possible claimant on his father's estate. Of course, if Captain Brown was connected with those people, his likeness to the Courthope family might be only too well accounted for, and the less said upon the subject the better.

Still, he was not sure about that, and if there was the remotest chance of this young fellow ever becoming troublesome, it might be well to keep him in hand. Upon the whole, his Grace thought it would be as well to consult Mr. Sharpe, who knew everything, and would be certain to have it in his power to clear up the mystery, if it were worth his while to do so.

Meantime the Duke had taken a very strong liking to the young man. He was very frequently at Beaumanoir with Lord Punjaub, being still the General's aide-de-camp, and in constant attendance upon him. He had been sent frequently with confidential messages between the Duke and his uncle; and the General being an indifferent penman, conducted all his correspondence through young Brown, who wrote a straight upright hand, the characters of which were as stiff and plain as a regiment of soldiers. In all these circumstances the aide-de-camp had behaved himself with perfect good taste, and shown himself peculiarly straightforward and unassuming. The Duke himself was not a straightforward man at all, and therefore liked those who were, because his own habits of subterfuge made him prompt to see through all kinds of deception and trickery. Gradually Captain Brown had come to fill the post of private secretary between the two noblemen, and many intricate accounts and complicated questions of business had passed through his hands. He seemed naturally to encourage confidence without inviting it, or thrusting himself into it. He never showed a vulgar astonishment at anything, however strange; but did what was

wanted of him without remark, paying little real attention to it, if the truth must be told, for he was perpetually thinking of Miss Wyldwyl, and would have done anything, however dry or wearisome, which kept him near her, and she with the Dowager Lady Newcomen were now installed at Beaumanoir, Lord Punjaub, indeed, having been legally placed by Mr. Mortmain in possession of it, and the Duke's life-interest having been formally ceded to him, though his Grace was still permitted by his kinsman's courtesy to be master there to outward seeming.

"Sharpe," said the Duke of Courthope one day, entering the lawyer's office in Argyll Street, "I want you to guess a riddle for me."

Mr. Sharpe no longer came to Beaumanoir, since it had belonged to Lord Punjaub, who had an Indian soldier's hatred of money-lenders: but the Duke and he kept up their old intercourse, and often did business together without the General's knowledge, some promises which had been given by the Duke to his uncle notwithstanding.

"To guess a riddle, your Grace?" echoed Mr. Sharpe. "With all the pleasure in life, if I can; and I think I may go so far as to say that there are few that I can't guess. What's the figure this morning, your Grace?" inquired Mr. Sharpe, blandly, having been recently paid many of his claims, and having little anxiety about the others, because he had received their value many times over in the shape of interest already.

"What are you good for, Sharpe?" asked the Duke, who could never refuse the offer of money. He liked even the crisp rustle of new bank-notes in his pocket, and it literally soothed his fingers to handle sovereigns.

"Anything your Grace likes under five figures," replied Mr. Sharpe, cheerfully; and the conversation diverged into the details of certain pecuniary transactions, during which the Duke's placid dignity was at times slightly ruffled.

"By the way, Sharpe," said the Duke, after a pause, and quite recovering his good spirits, as soon as all conversation about money was at an end, "you have not heard my riddle."

"Another riddle?" inquired Mr. Sharpe, in some alarm, for his Grace could whistle down even such an old bird as he sometimes; and had sometimes got a loan he should not have had on strict business principles. "I'm afraid we must put it off till next week, your Grace. I can meet you then, if you will give me an order on the manager of your tin mine."

"Ah! then, we'll talk about that. When shall it be—on Monday morning? I shall be in town on Monday morning, Sharpe, if that will suit you," said the Duke, graciously. Then he put his head a little on one side with that innocent childlike smile of his, and asked, "Can you tell me who the deuce is a Captain Brown, Lord Punjaub's aide-de-camp?"

"He! he!" laughed Mr. Sharpe. "Well, perhaps I could if I tried, your Grace."

"I thought so," replied the Duke, drawing his chair closer to the money-lender, in an excited way he had when amused. "Damn it, Sharpe, you know everything. Who the deuce is he, now?"

"Captain Brown, of the 1st Lancers, your Grace means?" asked Mr. Sharpe, to make sure about the person inquired after.

"Ay! that's the man I mean," smiled the Duke.

"Captain Brown, of the 1st Lancers," replied the lawyer, demurely, "is your Grace's son. His mother was barmaid of the 'Chequers' inn at Wakefield-in-the-Marsh. She was your cousin's daughter by the Scotch marriage, and therefore Countess of Winguid in her own right. She was married to Thomas Brown, a Northumberlandshire man, before her son's birth, and he is therefore in law Earl of Winguid now, for she is dead. In that mottled tin box, on the fourth shelf, marked W. B. in white letters, your Grace, are the proofs of his mother's marriage, which I took for heriot, as agent to Sir Richard Porteous, under whom she was a copyholder. Your Grace, or young Brown, might now have been Earl of Winguid if he had employed a sharp solicitor; though we should have made a fight for it, your Grace—we should have made a fight for it."

"Ah!" said the Duke, grandly, without any trace of emotion, "I thought you might know. Going to Richmond, Sharpe, this afternoon? It's monstrous fine weather, and I hear my horses fretting outside there. Pleasant afternoon."

Five minutes afterwards the Duke of Courthope was driving with exquisite skill down Bond Street, and Mr. Stultz remarked to his foreman how well his Grace looked that day; perhaps he was a little flushed. Towards eight o'clock he dined at White's, and played high stakes during the evening, winning largely; for the game was whist, which wants a cool head.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

THE Duke of Courthope did not, possibly, choose to make a parade of his feelings to Mr. Sharpe. It is not, however, fair to infer that the communication which he received from the money-lender made no impression upon them. He was a slow and rather indistinct thinker, and he had not made up his mind as to what he should do, or whether he should do anything. It no longer signified much to him, personally, who should be heir to the Winguid estates. His life-interest in them, as in all the rest of his property which he had not inherited from his mother, Lady Pencarrow, had been recently assigned to Lord Punjaub. It did not matter, therefore, one straw to him whether Captain Brown became Earl of Winguid, or whether Amabel Wyldwyl became a Countess

in her own right, after his decease. Any idea of dispossessing him now, during his lifetime, was, he well knew, utterly absurd. He would be dead long before such a case could be carried into Court by the most expert and diligent lawyers; and he thought of the term of human life with a sly satisfaction, because it would enable him to get the better of any possible enemies. Meanwhile, any talk or gossip which might arise on the subject would be utterly indifferent to him. He had been early hardened to public praise and public censure, and cared just as much for one as for the other. When he had been a young man, and the bitter clergyman of *The Times* had written a leader upon him and the game laws, he had felt very sore about it; now, the bitter clergyman or anybody else might write what they pleased about him—it would not disturb his rest or diminish his appetite.

He had not a very good appetite, and could no longer eat a couple of lunches at the farm-houses on his own land when he went out shooting. He was obliged to be abstemious, and to content himself with a cutlet and a pint of claret after very moderate fatigue on his shooting pony. By the way, Captain Brown had broken that shooting pony for him, and taught the beast to amble and to stand fire like a rock. Captain Brown was always turning up. Well, "blood is thicker than water," thought his Grace, who was fond of old proverbs, and perhaps after all it was natural that Captain Brown should turn up.

The Duke, who had much experience of life, had long observed that the handsome young officer, who was so like what he had been once upon a time, had made considerable progress in the good graces of Miss Wyldwyl; and he had watched their intercourse and walks and rides together, with the somewhat mischievous amusement of a man of the world, who does not mean to interfere with what does not concern him. He did not care how the matter ended then; and when their approaching marriage had been announced to him, it had not taken him by surprise. He has wished them joy as lord-lieutenant of his county, and shaken hands with Lord Punjaub, as is usual on such occasions, also with Captain Brown, whom he had asked to take wine with him. The Captain would be a rich man soon, and his Grace had noticed that young fellows who had just come into property could be often induced to invest it upon security tendered by their connections, though it was not strictly marketable.

What if he were to take up young Brown, and handsomely acknowledge the relationship between them? How would that work? The Duke rubbed his chin, and something seemed to answer, "Doubtfully." All the best cards were on the other side. Egad, he would have done better years ago if he had married that village girl at Wakefield; but how could he know then that she was his first-cousin, and heiress to the Winguid property? The parsons would tell him that in any case he should have married her, and that a life passed under the law is always more prosperous than a life of licence, bearing many good seeds in it, which always blossom in due time; whereas the other life grows ever

such bitter weeds. Perhaps the parsons were right, but it was over now. He had made his choice, and must abide by it. His eyes grew moist, and there was an oppression on his chest when he thought of this. Was his heart yearning towards the young soldier? Would he have really wished to have that stout arm to lean upon in his old age, and to be able to say in the face of the world, "This is my son; look at him—see how brave and good he is. I am not childless; I have a companion and a friend, as well as an heir, who shall transmit my name to unborn generations"?

The Duke was an unscrupulous man, and he knitted his brows till they met while he sought for a solution of this difficulty. Few obstacles had ever stood in the way of those resolute Wyldwyls. He might, it was quite possible—he might declare that he had been privately married to Madge over the border; and Sharpe, if it served his purpose, could produce witnesses in support of the statement. It might be easily done, and the sovereign might revive all his titles in the person of an undoubted Earl of Winguid. But how could the real marriage of Madge with Thomas Brown be got over? It was unfortunate that the English laws do not recognise the right of adoption. To be sure, the Duke was a Count of the Holy Roman Empire among other things, and by declaring his marriage in Italy, young Brown would become a Count of the Holy Roman Empire too; but that was only giving him a fine historic title, which perhaps he would not appreciate, and means must be taken to make him Duke of Courthope. His Grace would think over them, and take advice. Mortmain was of no use in troubled waters, but Sharpe, who knew the whole story, would go any lengths. Lord Overlaw, the Premier, too, who had just succeeded Lord Hanaper, as usual, was his firmest friend now living, and could understand a gentleman's wishes in such a case. Much might be done in this way with time and management. There were several peerages which had been manipulated. They might begin by making young Brown a baron on his marriage with Lord Punjaub's heiress, or give him the remainder in the General's patent; then shortly afterwards he could be raised to an earldom, as had been done in a recent case. He might take the Wyldwyl name, too, ostensibly in right of his wife. "Oh, yes," muttered the Duke, drawing down the corners of his mouth, "I think I can pull him through."

Having made up his mind to acknowledge his own son, the Duke determined to be quick about it, for he was eager to enter into possession of the only affection left to him; and he thought with complacency how keen an interest he would begin to take again in politics, with the new objects which he had in view. Nevertheless, there was more than one hitch in the way of putting things upon the footing which he desired they should occupy. The Captain treated him with deference and respect, but his manners had grown somewhat cooler of late, because he had not been able to resist the conviction which an intimate knowledge of the Duke's affairs had forced upon him, that his Grace had not behaved altogether

honourably towards Lord Punjaub. The Duke could not go up to him all at once and say, "You are my son; I have left you to starve for nearly a quarter of a century, or to beg, or to steal, and now I want to make you a peer of the realm, because I am a lonely old nobleman with a headache." Some more cautious way of breaking the business gently must be found, and the Duke, upon consideration, became convinced that no better mediator could be found between them than Dean Mowledy.

The priest came readily at the summons of the noble, and they conferred long together in that fine old library where the fortunes of the Courthopes had been so often decided. The Dean was much distressed, though his Grace spoke with infinite tact and delicacy; but the upshot of it all was that the only woman he had ever loved had been betrayed, that her heart had been broken, and that her destroyer stood before him, one of the princes of his people, and now sought a reward for his crime, instead of submitting meekly to the punishments which were due to it.

"I cannot—I dare not help your Grace," said the Dean, bowing his head upon his hands. 'It is not for me to judge what you have done; I beseech you to ask forgiveness where pardon may be found for all those who repent.'

The Duke was not prepared for this view of the case. He had been satisfied with himself, and thought he was doing a becoming and generous act. He was annoyed to find that a new-fledged Dean presumed to consider him as a reprobate, beyond the benefit of clergy. His Grace changed the conversation in a dry way he had when displeased, without condescending to discuss the merits of the topic in dispute; and he left an invitation to stay at Beaumanoir, which he was prepared to give the Dean, unuttered, as well as the implied promise of a bishopric which he had also prepared, not without a fair chance of being some day able to fulfil it, through Lord Overlaw, because Dean Mowledy was an unknown man, and there were no potent rivalries likely to be aroused by his promotion.

Then the Duke decided to act for himself; and one morning, after lunch, he took Captain Brown with winning familiarity by the arm, and walked about with him up and down the south terrace, where the monthly roses grew in gay profusion. The Duke was a wise and skilful gardener, and took great pains with them himself, having a natural taste for flowers, as he had for everything which was pretty, and bright, and fragrant. He often led his guests apart there when he had anything to say to them of a confidential character, and walked with them out of ear-shot up and down that terrace, while the roses nodded and tossed their fair heads to every light air that wanted with them.

What passed between the two gentlemen on this occasion was never known. It is possible that the Duke spoke in his grand, kind, protecting way, and let the truth rather appear than told it. He had the art of raising those he spoke to up to himself, if he so willed it, and had considerable command of pathos.

Miss Wyldwyl, observing them from her balcony, thought they made

a stately picture, as they walked slowly amidst the statues, fountains, and flowers which surrounded them, with here and there a peacock, strutting and displaying his gorgeous colours in the noonday sun. The Duke was fond of peacocks.

Their talk grew very earnest after a while, and then Miss Wyldwyl saw the Duke shade his eyes with one hand, stretch out the other, and place it upon his companion's shoulder; but the younger man turned away, and Miss Wyldwyl knew, by that subtle sympathy which is part of a deep affection, that there was indignation or sudden anger in the movement which he made. Still they walked on again presently, though her lover's head was downcast, and his whole form drooped in a dejected manner, as though he were weary or humbled. By-and-by they ceased speaking; some embarrassment was visible between them, and they parted. The Duke returned to the library, where he was for ever writing letters now; but William Brown did not seek her as he was wont. He took his way alone towards the sombre beech-woods of the park, with his hands hanging down listlessly, and an air of brooding sadness which she had never seen before.

She thought they must have been talking of the dead Marquis, and never penetrated that mystery, if mystery it was, though in after-life she guessed at it. They were married soon afterwards, and lived very happily, being rich—very rich—for the fortune of Mr. Brown, the Indian merchant, was bequeathed to them; and they were also prosperous and honoured, which is better still than being rich. Her husband's behaviour to the Duke of Courthope was henceforth subdued and respectful. He seemed to be always on the watch to render his Grace some service; and when he mounted the broad flight of steps on the terrace of Beaumanoir somewhat stiffly and feebly, her husband placed his hand beneath the Duke's arm and supported him. Captain Brown never addressed the Duke, but listened when he spoke as though under the influence of some spell which he dared not break; and once she saw him hold the Duke's stirrup when they rode out together. It was not usual for Captain Brown to show such deference to mere rank, and she observed it in her womanly way, then grew accustomed to it, and perhaps divined the cause. His Grace died suddenly of an affection of the heart one day while dressing for dinner, and honest George Wyldwyl became the last Duke of Courthope and Revel. The titles were never revived, the late peer having been called away, before his schemes were ripe, to a place where, maybe, dukedoms are of little worth. But in the fulness of years Amabel Wyldwyl became Countess of Winguid, as Madge should have been; so that, after all, William Brown and her descendants suffered little by the law of inheritance. For Time works wonders, and Wisdom is justified of her children.

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